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The Beaver

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COVER: A yellow-headed blackbird in Oak Hammock Marsh near Winnipeg. Photograph by Joyce Holmes.

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Colony and Company Sharing the York Mainline

By John A. Alwin

A NEW ELEMENT in the evolving geography of the Canadian Northwest was created when the Hudson's Bay Company officially deeded the 116,000 square mile territory of Assiniboia to Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk, in June 1811. In the years that followed this region played a central role in western Canadian development, profoundly influencing adjacent areas and activities. One immediate impact was the stress it introduced on the Hudson's Bay Company transport corridor inland from York Fort. The efforts by the Red River Colony and HBC to meet this increased demand in the pre-1821 period is one of the interesting stories of early western transport history.

Selkirk planned that this newly acquired tract of fertile territory centred on the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers would become a major agricultural colony for immigrants from the over-populated and economically depressed areas of the United Kingdom. He wasted little time in developing his grant. In July 1812 Miles Macdonell, his newly appointed Governor of Assiniboia, led the founding party inland from York Factory. Later that fall a contingent of 120 colonists followed the same well-travelled track inland to Lake Winnipeg and on to Red River.

William Auld, the officer in charge of the Company's Northern Department, had been instructed by the London headquarters to provide Selkirk with 'all assistance possible for conveying his People speedily to the place of his destination . . . '. Auld complied with this order but realized that 'the quicker that be dispatched the less loss will acrue to the Hon^ble^ Company.' It was obvious to him that Company assistance in the development and maintenance of the new colony would severely tax the Company's limited manpower, craft, and equally important, critical time during the short open water season in the interior. Company posts on both the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Rivers had already been directed to supply large amounts of pemmican, leather and leather products. All Churchill bateaux had been made available to the colonists, and York was engaged in a major boat construction program in support of the colony. The Saskatchewan District had been asked to provide water-craft for the colony's use, and its skilled boatmen had devoted critical summer travel time to assisting colony craft.

E. E. Rich has written that the increased demand on the trunk line inland from York 'seriously interrupted the business of the fur trade' and caused the Company to review its entire transport system inland from York. The Company's ongoing switch from canoes to wooden craft was a major and necessary step in the evolution of inland transport. Now it was thought this process had to be carried one step further if the trade in furs was to continue while an agricultural colony was simultaneously maintained in the interior. The settlement would eventually require improved transportation which could handle the large volumes of bulky commodities associated with such an operation. A winter road was proposed as the next step in the process of transport innovation and modification, and even the use of steamboats was briefly considered.

The idea for a major winter road inland from York can probably be attributed to Lord Selkirk, whose visionary nature provided a fresh perspective on transport potentials. William Auld at York first heard of the proposed scheme in an 1812 letter from Lord Selkirk, who thought the course of the road could be marked the next year. In his May 1813 correspondence from London, Auld received more details on the proposed road. This correspondence shows that the Company headquarters preferred a summer road from York to Lake Winnipeg, even if it had to be more circuitous than the present water route. If, according to natives, such a summer road was impractical because of the numerous intervening rivers, lakes, and marshes, they still wanted a winter road. In that case Auld was instructed to have Indians

blaze a road as it is called in America, that is notch or Mark the tree to the right & left as they go along; The next step is to send a proper person to examine this Line & if approved a few Men with Indians will soon cut down the trees to the right & left when the Roadway may be considered as made at least for the Winter Season.

The proposed mode of carriage was sleds drawn by either horses or reindeer. The committee considered reindeer best adapted for winter use, since they

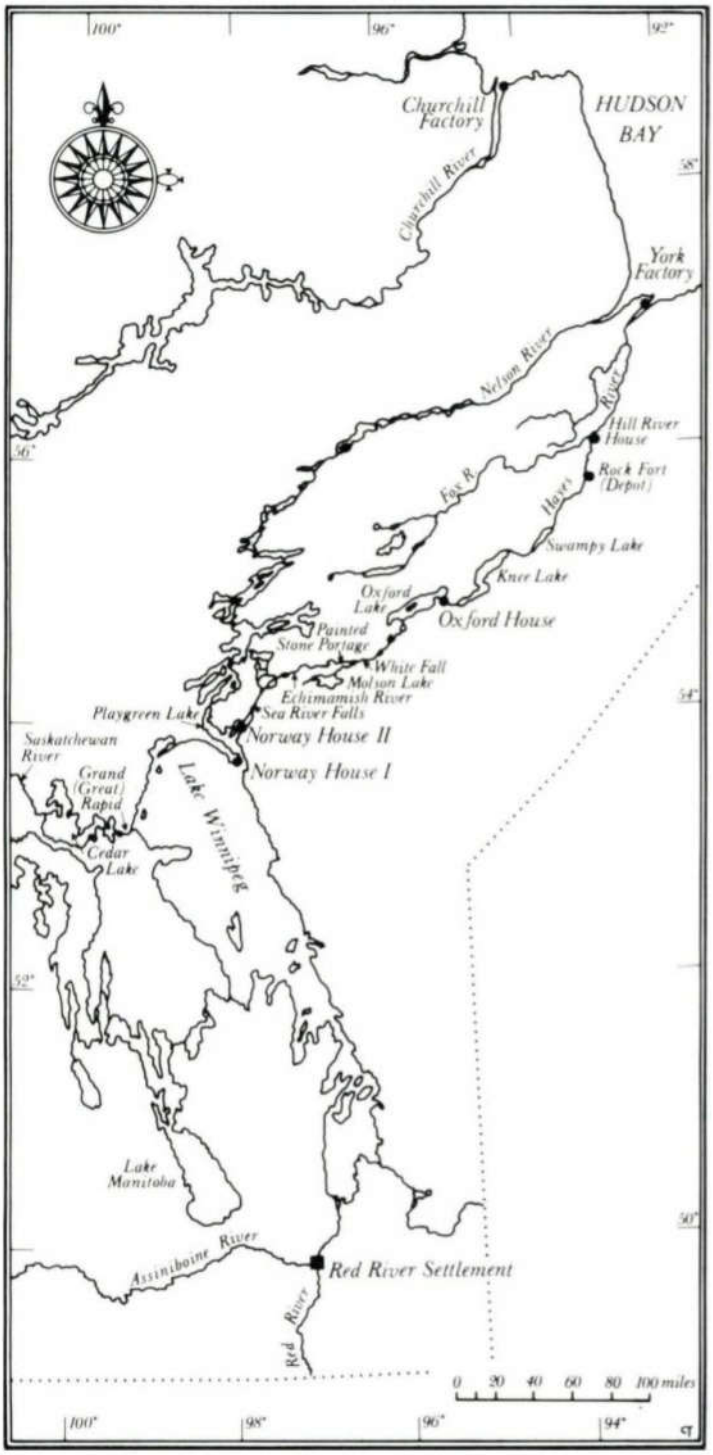
would be the easiest supported & when once tamed they are very quiet indeed in the Northern part of Europe no other domestic

Dr Alwin is assistant professor of geography at Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana. His doctoral thesis was on H B C Transportation 1670-1821.

Quotations from its archives by permission of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Hudson's Bay Company Collection

'York Boats at Norway House', a water-colour by W. J. Phillips, depicts a Hudson's Bay Company brigade c. 1867.



Map of the 'York Mainline' area in what is now Manitoba, showing the important points along the Hayes River-Lake Winnipeg route used by the HBC and colonists in the early 19th century.

Animal is used [.] We should think you could Catch a number of young Rein Deer alive which might be tamed & tho they would not perhaps be so quiet as those that have been long domesticated yet the next generation of them would be quiet enough . . .

If horses were used, farming stations would be needed at a spacing of fifty or sixty miles along the route where locally grown crops would be available for animal feed. If grain would not grow on these sites, hay and potatoes which could be used raw or boiled, would provide horse feed. It was planned that horses from each provisioning station would take sleds to the next, assumed to be a three-day journey, and then return. In addition to these major depots there would be a need for small intervening stations spaced at one-day intervals where travellers could spend nights while on the road. The committee suggested Auld discuss the road with Governor Macdonell since men from the settlement would have to assist in the road's construction, and he was evidently familiar with winter haul roads in Canada.

In 1814 more detailed specifics on the winter road were received in Rupert's Land from both Lord Selkirk and the Company headquarters. That year the committee devoted eight pages of its correspondence to the recently appointed Superintendent of the Northern Department, Thomas Thomas, to the subject of the winter road. They pointed out that with it,

So much more goods may be transported in this way during a winter, than could be done by the same number of men in boats during the short season of the Rivers being open, that it nearly amounts to bringing the maritime navigation to Lake Winipie.

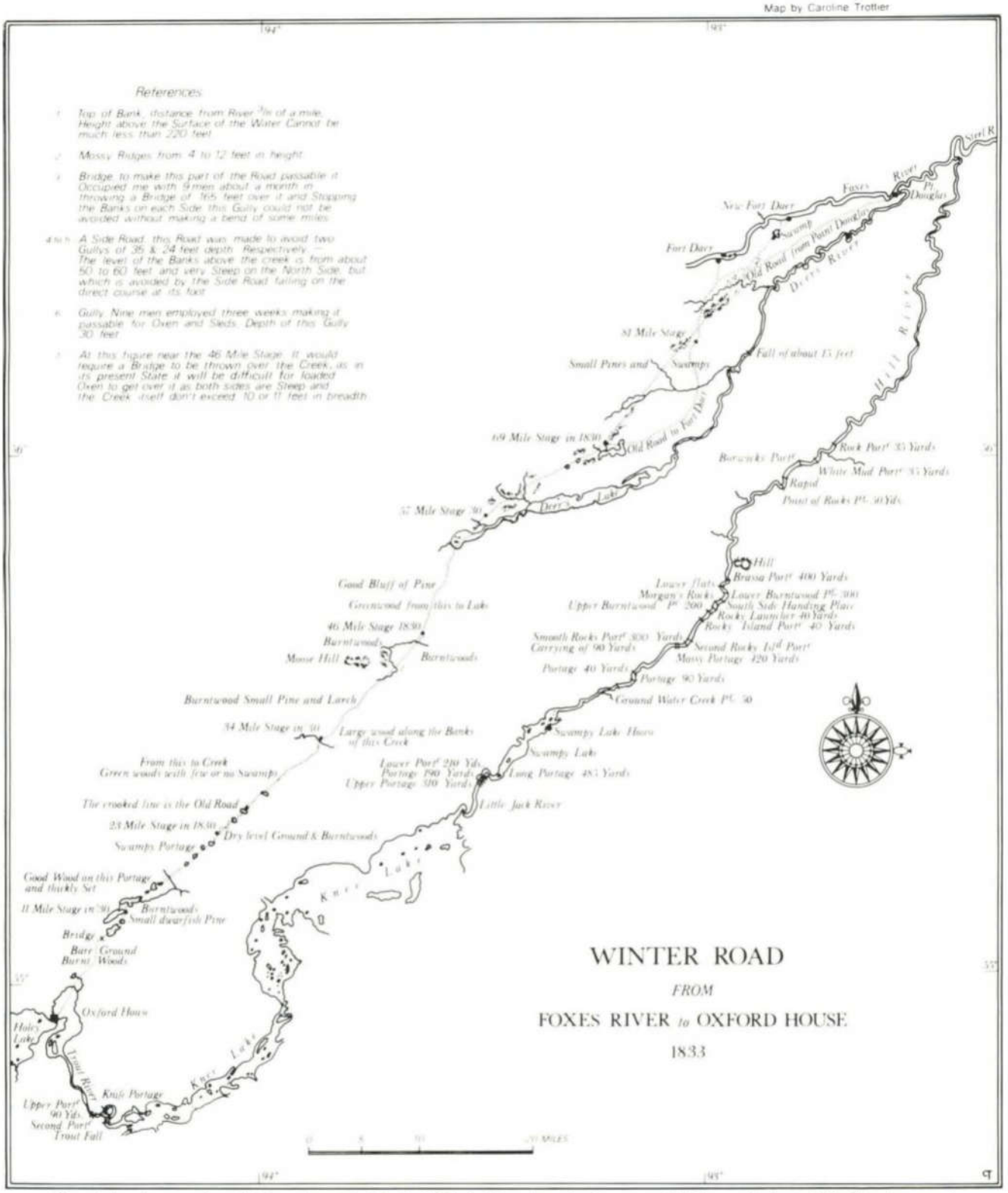
In fact, they assumed that one man using horses and a sled on the road during a winter would be able to transport at least three times the cargo of a boatman during one summer.

The committee enumerated five other obvious advantages they associated with the winter road.

1. The Company would be spared the expense of so many skilled steersmen for their inland craft.
2. If a cargo ship arrived late from England, essentials could still be conveyed inland.
3. Provisions and bulky furs could be taken down to York as back carriage.
4. Once the road was extended to Red River and the colonists began producing exportable commodities, so much would be carried down to York for export that Company goods essential for its trade could be carried up at little expense each winter to the Grand Rapid of the Saskatchewan or Lake Winnipeg, where inland boats could pick up the cargoes in the spring.
5. It would facilitate the communication of intelligence and the occasional passage of principal officers.

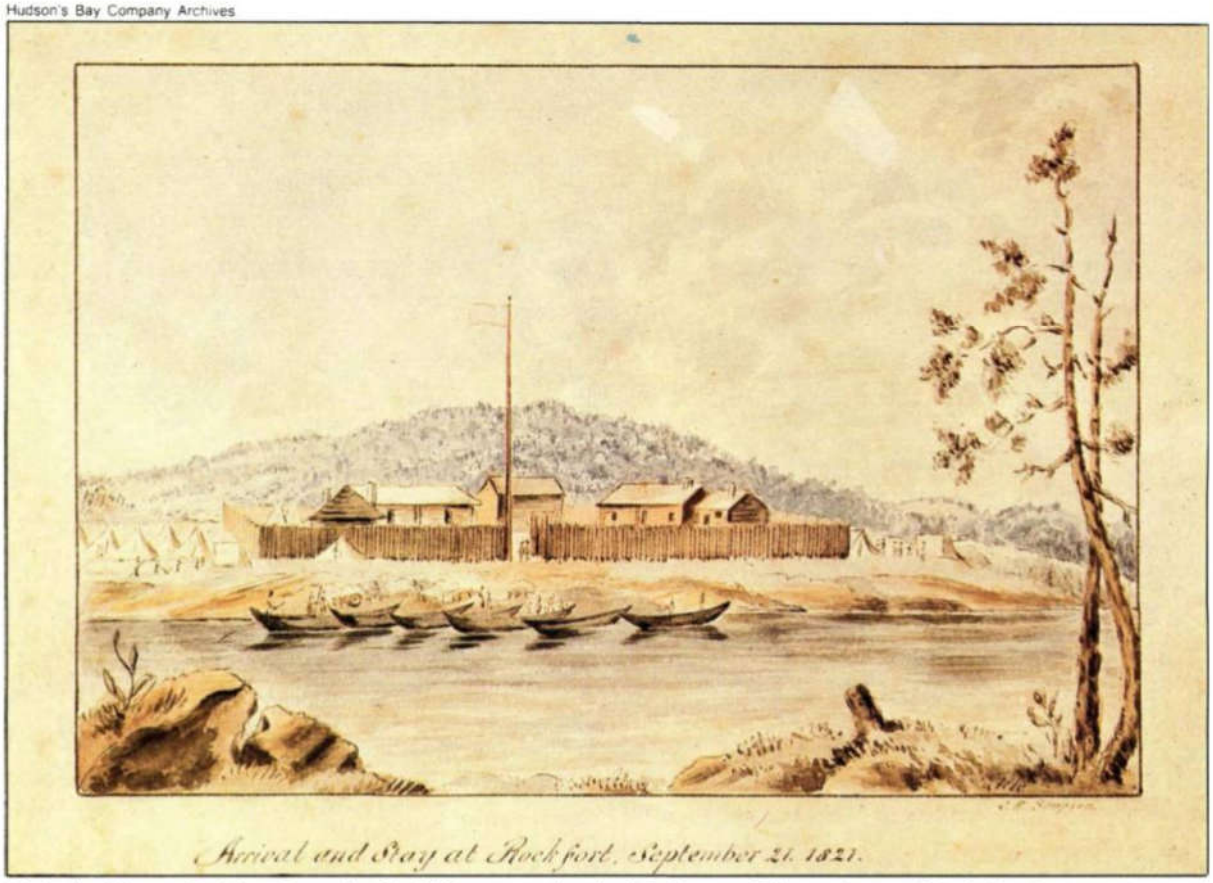
They were convinced of the practicability of a haul road and pointed to use in other parts of America and

Map by Caroline Trottier



Map of the winter road, copied from the original in the HBC Archives drawn by Company clerk George Taylor in 1833. The winter road between York and Playgreen Lake was completed in some form by the late 1820s, but never became a viable proposition. Rather, the HBC and colonists relied mainly on wooden water-craft along the Hayes River route. Canoes usually shuttled goods up and down the Hill River, the difficult section of the Hayes between Swampy Lake and its junction with the Fox.

Hudson's Bay Company Archives



'Arrival and Stay at Rock fort, September 21, 1821', a water-colour by J. R. Simpson. This was the second Rock Fort (Depot), constructed on the Hayes River some time after 1814 with the intention that it would serve as a depot for the Red River Colony.

Europe, as well as in 'every part of the extensive dominions of Russia.' A group of Scandinavians, who were not to be attached to Company trading establishments but were to be paid from a fund set up for permanent improvements, was sent to York that season to begin work on the road.

The committee had accepted Auld's earlier suggestion that the road follow frozen lakes and rivers where practical, passing overland only to cut across points of land. Such sections could thus also double as portages during summer. Establishing a chain of posts at a moderate spacing to house men who would be employed building the road was seen as the first step. Since the committee assumed eighteen days to be the required time for a sled drawn by two horses to travel from York to Playgreen Lake, and they wanted major stages at three-day intervals, they directed that five intermediate depots be built between York and a depot on Playgreen Lake.

In selecting the sites for these intermediate stages Auld was instructed to consider the fishing potential and to try to locate them as close as possible to difficult sections along the water road so men stationed at them year round could occasionally assist the passage of boats, even though their primary summer responsibility would be cultivation of crops to feed themselves and horses. But in choosing locations, it was made clear 'the consideration of most indispensible necessity is that the soil be favorable for cultivation.' Possible sites suggested by the committee for these intermediate stages included one on Hayes River about 120 miles from its mouth, one near the outlet of Knee Lake, and another near Oxford House. If the road were extended to the Great Falls on the Saskatchewan, an additional stage would be needed between there and Playgreen Lake. The committee hoped that Thomas would have the sites for the stages selected and a log house built at each before the arrival of the ship at York that year. They looked forward to limited use of the road in the winter of 1815-16, and to its completion by the next winter.

Later that season the committee wrote to Thomas from Gravesend, providing a list of Norwegians who had been engaged; they also planned to have three Swedes, from whom they expected considerable advantage because of their practical skill in cold-land cultivation, join ship at the Orkney Islands. The Norwegians were to be assigned to clearing land and planting. Thomas was instructed that when each had cleared and planted fifteen acres, their three years'

service would be considered met. For each additional acre cleared a man was to receive £4. As further encouragement each was also entitled to one shilling for each bushel of potatoes above eighty bushels harvested from each acre, and three shillings for each bushel of grain over fifteen bushels per acre. The committee suggested the Norwegians be broken into only two groups the first season, and then sent to the other stations the second year. The first year all cleared land was to be planted in potatoes or spring corn, and all land cleared between the time of the sowing of these crops and August to be planted in rye. Plans had to be somewhat modified since the three Swedish labourers experienced in cold-land agriculture did not reach Stromness until after departure of the ship. Later that season, in London correspondence sent via Montreal, Thomas was told, 'In order to remedy in part the inconvenience arising from the detention of these men, directions were given to send you from Canada, three or four Axemen, expert in the American method of Cultivation & clearing the Woods.'

Lord Selkirk's spring 1814 London correspondence to Governor Macdonell also concerned the subject of the planned winter road and its importance to the colony's eventual export trade. Since by that time the Company was solely responsible for the cost of construction of the road from York to Playgreen Lake, his letter dealt primarily with the section from Playgreen Lake to Red River, which was the colony's responsibility. To facilitate the establishment of the colony's section, the Company granted permission for Selkirk to lease small areas of Company land between Playgreen Lake and the northern boundary of the grant for winter-road stations. Selkirk planned for the road to pass down the west side of Lake Winnipeg, and thought it would require two stations on Company lands and five additional ones within the colony. As well, the Company had granted permission for the colony to lease land necessary to establish its own depot at the outlet of Lake Winnipeg and another on the Hayes River below the Rock, 120 miles inland from York where the first rapids were encountered. Macdonell was instructed to select sites for each of these establishments and set men to work at each. In applying to Auld for permission to use Hill River House, located just below the Rock, until their own structures were built, Macdonell indicated that he eventually planned to have most cargoes carried directly from the ship to Hill River House and the Rock without even being landed at York, and thereby limit inconvenience to the Company.

Selkirk evidently had supplied Macdonell with a plan of the road and asked him to consult with Auld on it and the requisite stations. Above the Rock, Macdonell considered a stage at White Fall the most important. The site was favourable for timber and grass, and was well suited for cultivation. There he assumed the road would have to follow a new track to avoid a steep, rocky ascent 'so that the boats might be easily brought over on truck carriages & the goods in carts . . .'.

Although eight Norwegians and an interpreter had been sent to York in 1814, it does not appear that they began construction of the first winter-road depot, Norway House, that year. This proved to be only the beginning of a long series of delays which prevented the completion of the winter road.

Almost from the start there were doubts of the practicability of the road among ranking officers in the Northwest. Just before losing his post as Superintendent of the Northern Department, William Auld, in the spring of 1814, decided not to co-operate with plans for the winter road. On his return to London he intended to point out the impracticability of the road, along which he was sure no HBC cargoes would ever be carried. He felt it would be detrimental to the trade to have Company servants employed in transport during the winter months when they should be engaged in obtaining furs and attending the natives. He was also convinced that horses in such country would not be able to drag even half the load along the planned route.

In 1815 Thomas Thomas, the newly appointed Governor of the Northern Department wrote,

> I have always thought that the Winters Roads on the Rivers would be found difficult if not impracticable here, and could not conceive the means by which they were made to answer in other Countries — Mr. Pritchard informs me that they are only used in inhabited Countries where every Settler is obliged to assist in keeping the Snow Road in good Order, this cannot be done here as the Country may be said to be uninhabited. I dare say Mr. P. [Pritchard] will tell you that it would have been impossible for Horses to have travelled on the Ice over which he has passed, though he has only seen it late in the Season, when those Parts in which the Ice was not piled very high have been made in fine Degree level by the Snow.

Thomas saw more potential in improved water communication, and the previous year had suggested that service on the York track could be improved by using different types of craft, custom-built to service specific sections of the route. The Company headquarters welcomed his proposed modifications along the water road, but did not want them to supersede the planned winter road. They wrote,

> It will be of essential advantage to have a free communication at all seasons of the year; and the two plans so far from being inconsistent will materially assist each other, as the men who are employed in the various species of river Craft in the summer may be employed at the winter stations during the sledging season, so that a profitable employment may be found for them during the whole year instead of one season only.

Thomas asked that Macdonell note sections along the York track where large boats could be used and he planned to personally inspect the route that spring to determine what type and size craft would be best suited to each segment below Playgreen Lake. What makes Thomas's plan even more distinctive is his proposal

Manitoba Archives

Miles Macdonell, appointed Governor of Assiniboia 1811, was responsible for co-ordinating the Colony's role in developing a transport system inland from York.

that steamboats be used on the route. Although the first use of a steamboat dates back to 1783 in France, the first practical employment of such craft dates only from 1802 when one began service on the Firth and Clyde Canal in southern Scotland. It was not until seven years later that the first steamboat in British North America was put in water at Montreal. Thomas, however, had no firsthand experience with steamboats and wrote to Macdonell requesting him to 'make some Enquiries, if you have an Opportunity, as to the Depth of Water which a Boat of this Kind requires, and the Quantity of Power which can by steam be applied to it, and I should be glad to know what space in the Boat, an Engine of a given Power say 2, 3, or 4 Horse Power must occupy . . .'. Thomas's proposal for the application of steam power to Company craft seems only somewhat less innovative when it is realized that as former Superintendent of the Southern Department he was familiar with the erection of a steam-driven sawmill at Moose Fort in 1813.

On his August 1815 return to York from Playgreen Lake, Thomas carefully examined rivers and lakes along the water road determining what types of craft would be best suited for each section. At that time, flattish-bottomed clinker-built boats with about 25-foot keels in large rake fore and aft, early versions of what later became known as the York Boat, were the standard Company craft between Playgreen Lake and the lower end of Swampy Lake. Canoes usually shuttled goods up and down Hill River, the difficult section of the Hayes between Swampy Lake and its junction with the Fox River. On the broad and more gentle reach of the Hayes below its junction with the Fox, larger craft of up to 12 tons capacity were used.

After careful inspection of the route that summer, Thomas had specific proposals for improving transport along the water road linking Playgreen Lake and York Factory. From the outlet of Lake Winnipeg to Sea River Fall downstream on the Nelson River, a distance Thomas estimated to equal about thirty-six miles, he thought a decked barge of fifteen to twenty tons with lee boards could be employed. Rather than portage such a large craft he suggested that cargoes be conveyed overland to another vessel of the same type on the opposite side of the portage. This craft could then proceed east to Painted Stone Portage, where again cargoes would be transferred to a third craft of the same description. He assumed that by building two small locks, the Echimamish River could be navigated by such barges. Below Painted Stone Portage, this vessel would service the section between there and White Fall, where cargoes would again have to be transferred to yet another vessel. Thomas envisioned this lengthy portage crossed by a road over which wheeled carriages could travel. He did not mention what size craft would continue on below this portage, but the implication was that a vessel of the same size would be appropriate. Hill Portage was also to be upgraded to accommodate wheeled carriages. Below there a smaller craft of unspecified size would be necessary. On Oxford Lake a large decked barge of from 30 to 60 tons could be used. Between Oxford and Knee Lakes, much smaller boats with a capacity of 60 pieces of 90 pounds each would be the largest possible craft. He considered Knee Lake navigable for vessels of 50 or 60 tons, but below there downriver to the Rock, the same 60-piece-capacity boats would have to be used until improvements were made in the track. A large steamboat would ply the final section between the Rock, and York. No immediate action was taken on Thomas's suggestions for improving the York track, but three years later acting Governor James Bird of the Northern Department was directed to improve the York to Lake Winnipeg route by upgrading portages, and providing 'boats adapted to the different parts of the navigation . . .'

Although Lord Selkirk supported the winter road concept, he also realized that an adequate water communication between York and the Colony was essential for its success, and directed in 1813 that a schooner be built for use on Lake Winnipeg. A schooner was in use by 1815 when Peter Fidler commented on its weak bottom owing to the fact that it was originally made for a boat which had subsequently been lengthened to construct the schooner. After hearing reports of difficulty in sailing on Lake

C. H. M. Gordon, Hudson's Bay Company Collection

York Boat crew struggling to get their heavy wooden craft over a shallow spot on the route between York Factory and Norway House.

Winnipeg. Selkirk suggested that the best substitute for sailing vessels on the lake would be Durham Boats which by then were in common use on the St Lawrence River. Reportedly 80 or 90 feet long, no wider than a bateau, and manned by eight oarsmen, they could carry 150 barrels, six to seven times the capacity of a bateau. Assuming such craft could be used both on Lake Winnipeg and on the Hayes River below the Rock, Selkirk requested that the exact dimensions be obtained at Montreal. Durham Boats did not see service along any section of the York-Red River route at this time. The most dramatic improvement in the Colony's water communication involved the use of large sailing vessels on Lake Winnipeg.

The struggling Red River Colony was not able to produce a large agricultural surplus or other exportable staples prior to 1821, and only managed two good crop years in the first ten years of its existence. Thus, the Colony's demand for transport along the route to York did not increase dramatically during this period. During this time, however, the Colony appears to have reduced its dependence on HBC transport assistance. This can probably be explained by the Colony's practice of hiring Canadian Freemen to work in the boats, and to acquired navigational skills among colonists.

Despite the proposed use of steamboats and overland conveyances along a winter road, both the colonists and Company relied mainly on wind and muscle-powered wooden water-craft along the York mainline in the pre-1821 period. Steamboats did not ply the waters of the western interior until several decades later, and when the first steamboat arrived at the Red River Colony in 1859 it approached from the south. Although sections of the winter road between York and Playgreen Lake were completed in some form by the late 1820s, and work on it continued sporadically into at least the 1830s, it never became a viable proposition owing to problems such as high mortality of draft animals during winter months, problems with acquiring adequate feed, excess damage to goods in transit, and late delivery of cargo. Describing the problems associated with the winter road in 1830, Governor George Simpson wrote, 'in short such a mess of confusion as never fell under my observation now presents itself . . .'. Still, the mere proposal for a winter roadway and even the suggested use of steam-powered water-craft serving a transport line from the shore of Hudson Bay deep into the continental interior was a profound comment on the maturing European occupancy of the Canadian Northwest. ◆

Courtesy of Irwin Patterson

Johnston Patterson and his wife Sarah. From a tintype picture taken outside their log home on Sunday, 20 August 1880, just before the couple left for church. Johnston holds a grain cradle and Sarah, a broom.

Mrs Lee-Whiting, a microbiologist, has lived in Deep River, Ontario, for the past 18 years. She now applies her training in research to the investigation of the social history of the Upper Ottawa Valley.

'Chored Around All Day'

By Brenda Lee-Whiting

JOHNSTON PATTERSON was born in 1851 on a homestead near Smith's Falls, two years after his parents had immigrated from Ballyhinch, Ireland, to eastern Ontario. When the boy was five years old the family moved to Renfrew County, and settled on timbered land in Bromley Township on a concession road known locally as the Barr Line. Here John and Matilda Patterson lived for the rest of their lives.

Their four sons and two daughters must have been too young to offer much assistance when the Irish immigrants cleared the land and built their home. As the children grew up, they learned the labours of everyday life on a small mixed farm where a family was almost self-sufficient.

Johnston started to keep his diary in April 1877. He was then a 26-year-old bachelor, living and working on his father's property, but beginning to plan and work for a farm of his own. His record of daily events is terse, limited to one line for every day. This is understandable, for few of the original settlers to the Ottawa Valley were literate; personal accounts of their homesteading days are rare.

Johnston Patterson worked between his father's homestead and his own every day except Sunday which he reserved for attendance at church. He undertook an active part in the construction of the Northcote Presbyterian Church, journeying to the Balaclava sawmill on 3 July 1878 for some of the lumber, and attending the opening ceremony on 17 November that year. Only the stormiest weather could prevent his presence at the place of worship on the Sabbath, except for one memorable day when he lost his first cow.

Johnston was also an active temperance man and faithfully attended meetings of the Temple in his locality. For the first three years of his diary, his main pre-occupation was the preparation of his land at Northcote in the adjoining township of Admaston, and the building of his farmhouse which preceded his marriage on Christmas Day, 1879.

Descendants believe that the two young people met only once, as adults, prior to their wedding, and that the marriage had been arranged by their respective families. Entries in the diary would appear to support this idea. Certainly Johnston had little time for frivolity in his six-day working week; it was divided between his father's farm, his own new farm and providing help to friends and brothers on their properties, for labour was exchanged freely.

On 28 May 1877 he wrote: 'Commenced to brush on my own farm.' In succeeding weeks he fenced the land, stumped, picked roots, made a gate and took his turn in the performance of statute labour on the concession road.

During the summer he was living on his parents' farm and was engaged in hoeing potatoes, ploughing the land, harvesting crops, sowing fall wheat and preparing for a visit of the threshing mill. On wet days he could oil harness, grind scythes, paint a neck yoke, make a hay rake, saw wood, butcher livestock, fix the pig house, or he 'chored around all day', an entry that he was fond of recording. His only holidays appear to have been a picnic on 1 July and a 'Grand Celebration' in Douglas on 12 July, the day of the Orangemen's Parade.

By October he had returned to work on his own land where he picked roots, stumped, and made more fences. In November he dug drains and occasionally had time to go hunting with his brothers.

In the winter when snow smoothed the path of horse-drawn sleighs he travelled to stores in Renfrew and Douglas, 12 and six miles away, to trade farm goods. He drove oats to the grist mill at Douglas and he took wool to the Osceola mill in exchange for fulcloth. Then he travelled to Renfrew with wheat and bought a harness.

On 14 February 1878, Johnston 'commenced to make logs'. He continued this task for several days, but he employed another man, John Phillips, to hew the logs into a squared shape. Johnston fetched cedars from William Ross on 28 February, made his own shaving-house 1 March, and began to make shingles — piles and piles of shingles — which he drove down to his farm on 17 February. Then he made some sills.

His older brother, William John, was entrusted with the task of laying the foundation of the house on 23 March. The day was a stormy one, but the job could not be postponed, for 24 March had been set as the day to 'raise' the four walls of the house. A gang of helpers had been recruited to provide the labour for the raising and all went well, for it was a fine day. Those who helped would soon be repaid by the labour of Johnston, as his diary shows. His indebtedness included the contribution of Wes Phillips who had

agreed to board the helpers.

Then followed a busy spring of pulling more stumps. Johnston ploughed the land and sowed his first crops of peas, oats and wheat. He was still picking roots in May, the month he sowed potatoes, and he was careful to protect the crop with Paris green. During this time he lived and worked on his parents' farm, and it was there that he sheared sheep; later he took the wool to a carding mill, and eventually killed the sheep in August. There was no livestock on his own farm as yet.

When time permitted Johnston continued to work on his house. He fetched 100 pounds of nails from Renfrew to use on his house, hewed rafters and made pins. His three brothers all helped and the diary reveals their characters well. The oldest brother, William John, was responsible for tasks that required an experienced, dependable man: he raised the rafters and boarded the house on the gable ends. His younger brother James was steady enough, but the youngest brother, George, was given the easiest job of whitewashing. There are several references to George's 'loafing' and to the number of times that he managed to cut his finger.

Johnston records that he and James, using two cradles, cut his first crop of oats. After the summer harvests had been gathered at both farms, scaffolds were constructed at the new house on 1 October. The roof was shingled that month and the ridge board was finally laid on 23 October, ensuring that the structure would be enclosed before the snow fell. The threshing mill arrived at the new farm on 6 November and by the following day at 3 p.m. it had produced 82 bags of wheat.

Throughout the year of 1878, Johnston's only vacation from work had been a day visit to the Renfrew Exhibition in September, a shooting match in November, and one party in December.

Early in the year (1879) the industrious young man set off to work at a logging shanty in the Haliburton region. He had been hired before Christmas and he left his family on New Year's Eve for a six-day journey to Lansway's Shanty, presumably with a team of horses. For the next two and a half months the entries in his diary are scanty and repetitive. He drove logs and worked on the roads and by the middle of February he was admitting that he felt 'very lonesome'. He left the shanty in mid-March and returned home. There he hauled his bags of wheat to Renfrew and Douglas, and sold them to pay off bills owing to the merchants in both villages. He does not say what the payments covered, but they were probably made for supplies needed in the construction of his house.

On 23 May, his entry read, 'Commenced work at my place. Stumped all day'. This summer his seasonal chores of clearing and ploughing and sowing were interrupted by a ten-day visit to Smith's Falls, from 18 June to 28 June. The diary relates that he visited many families, probably former friends of his parents when they lived there; the surnames include Coolidge, Rice, Lukus, Grant, Hall, Curry, and there is a reference to Uncle John. The reticent young man does not write of any courtship of Sarah Agnes Smith, the 19-year-old girl whom he was to marry at the end of the year, but he must have met her on this trip.

When he returned home he assisted at another house raising, drove a load of wool to Renfrew's carding mill and spent days cutting his hay and harvesting the rye. Despite the endless round of chores, there were signs that summer that the hard-working, church-going young farmer was restless and troubled. It showed in his diary. Between one page which ends 4 August and another that begins 5 August, there is a page headed August 1879. It begins incoherently with remarks about setting sail at Liverpool and Columbus discovering America and the continues with homilies:

Command you may, your mind from play.
Every line and every letter, try to write a little better.
Industry is the road to Wealth and virtue to Happiness.
Govern thyself from evil Passions, Johnston.

That month he arranged for insurance to cover his property. If he arranged for his approaching marriage at that time, the diary does not reveal it, but when he went to Renfrew for the annual fair in September he bought himself a suit of clothes.

By October, his brother William John was laying the floor in the new house and George was digging out the cellar. Then the older brother spent a day putting in windows, while George and Johnston mixed mortar and chinked the spaces between the logs. Johnston, evidently shopping around, purchased a stove and a pipe in Renfrew and a door in Douglas.

It was getting cold by the time the brothers finished working on the house at the end of November; the latch was placed on the door on 28 November and the next day the chips were cleaned up.

Johnston contructed a stable during December. Four men helped him raise the walls, but he did the rest of the work himself, from planing the wood to plastering. As Christmas approached, there was feverish activity at the new house. Johnston was working on a partition, James was putting in the stove and someone else worked until nine o'clock one night, building stairs. Firewood was cut and stacked ready for use. Finally on 23 December, a woman's touch was needed. The diary records, 'I had the girls [probably his sisters, Mary and Sara] cleaning the house and whitewashing. That same day James brought in a table.

On Christmas Eve Johnston departed for Smith's Falls, apparently alone. He recorded only that it was a very sleety morning. The entry for Christmas Day is rather formal; 'I was married to Miss S. A. Smith'.

Brenda Lee Whiting

Johnston Patterson's farmhouse as it appeared in 1978. Stump fences still bound the fields he cleared of timber and stone. The building has been derelict for many years; the new owner plans to demolish it and remove the logs to a different site.

There was no further detail about his bride. Nearly 100 years later, her daughter-in-law, Mrs Irwin Patterson added to the story. Sarah Patterson, she recalled, was the daughter of a captain of a boat on the Great Lakes. Her mother died after giving birth to twin girls. One of the infants also died and the surviving child, Sarah, was sent to live with a grandmother in Smith's Falls.

On 26 December the newlyweds journeyed from Smith's Falls to Sand Point by train. At this station near Renfrew one of Johnston's brothers met the couple with a horse and buggy. They moved into their own house on 27 December and were at church the next day where they 'received many greetings'.

Johnston continued to keep his diary, and his wife, whom he referred to as Sarah A. to avoid confusion with his sister Sara, made her presence felt. Five days after his marriage the husband travelled to the village of Douglas with a grist for the mill. He returned home with 180 pounds of flour, and brought back a looking-glass and a broom.

In February Johnston purchased a cow for $16 and after she had calved in August Johnston bought a churn. He wrote that Sarah churned butter for the first time on 14 August. Two weeks later a photographer came to the neighbourhood, and after taking pictures at the senior Pattersons' home he visited the young

Brenda Lee-Whiting

Five days after his wedding, on 30 December 1879, Johnston Patterson drove to this grist mill at Douglas on the Bonnechere River and returned home with 180 pounds of flour.

couple on Sunday, 29 August, just before they set off for church. In the photograph that records their appearance for posterity, Johnston and Sarah are standing in front of their simple log house. Sarah is holding her broom but her formal dress suggests that she is not about to use it. Johnston, with one hand in his braces, is casually posing with a grain cradle. Their rocky land, edged by bush, illustrates their pioneer life in the wilderness.

Johnston's diary continued until 1906 and over those 29 years the chores of running a small mixed farm changed little. With the coming of the railroad through the township in 1893 the Pattersons could more easily journey to Renfrew by train, to have their teeth pulled or to buy a pair of boots. They could also take an excursion to Barry's Bay or even a day trip to Ottawa. Every year Johnston attended the Renfrew Fair, reflecting his interest in farm improvement. He was one of the first farmers to contribute to the cheese factory on the Barr Line, for in 1894 his diary records that he hauled milk to this factory and on other days drove cheese to Renfrew.

The Pattersons had three children. When the first was born on Sunday, 10 August 1884, the father's diary noted: 'Robert was born at 6 o'clock. I was at home.' Their daughter, Lillie, was born 19 September 1893, and when their second son, Irwin, arrived on 28 August 1897, the entry was even more laconic, 'Our baby boy was born. Chored around.'

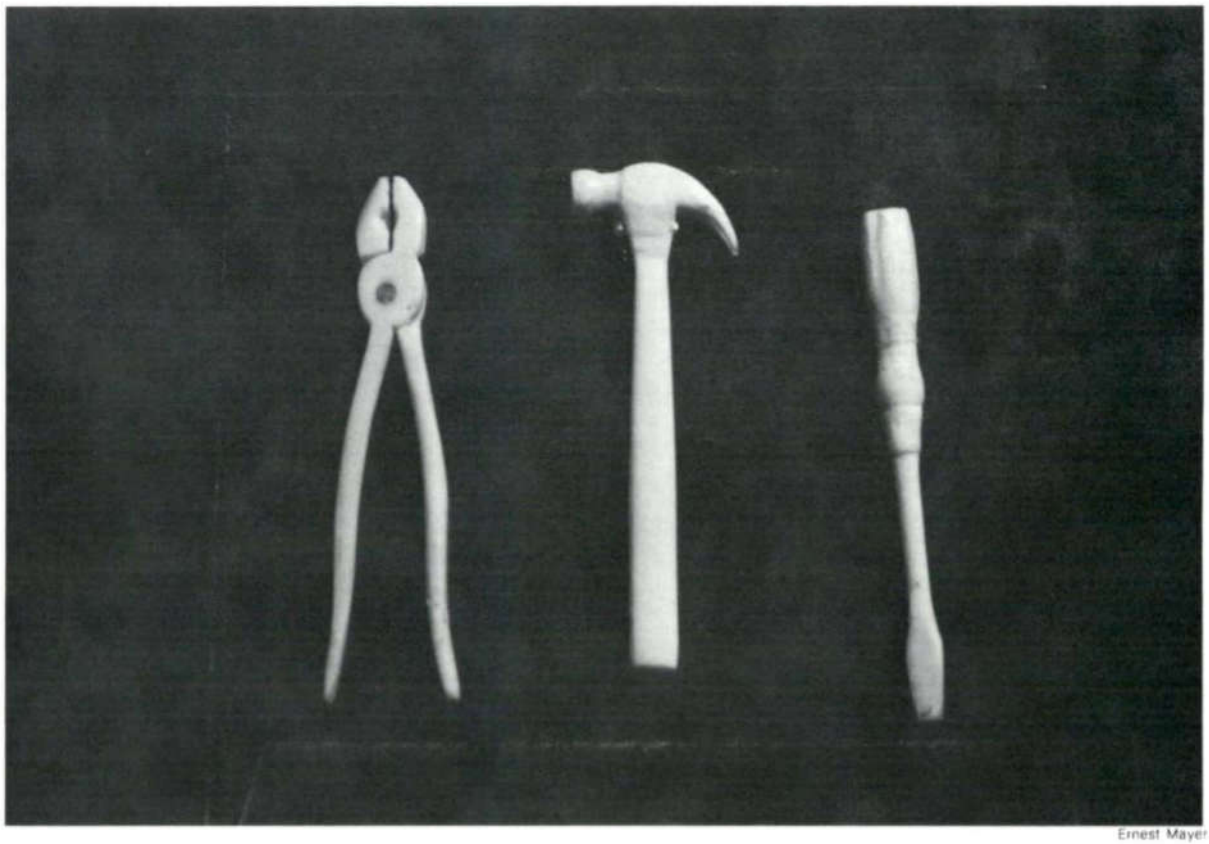
An addition was built to the farmhouse in April 1900. The Pattersons lived in their original home until 1910, and then sold it to their 26-year-old son, Robert. It passed out of the family's possession in 1952. Since then the property has passed through a succession of owners and is now accessible only from another farm. The pastures are still in use, but the farmhouse has been sold for its logs.

In the summer of 1978 the roof of the house was collapsing and it presented a desolate sight. Irwin Patterson, who left the house as a 13-year-old boy, mourned the loss of the butternut trees which had been planted by Sarah when she came from Smith's Falls as a bride.

'They were about the width of a stove-pipe when we left here' he said. He added that the livestock had damaged them.

Of the mills that served Johnston and his generation so well, only the grist mill at Douglas is still in operation. The carding mill at Renfrew still stands but is used as a museum, the Balaclava sawmill is silent and the Osceola woollen mill has completely disappeared. Sarah lived until 1951, some thirty years longer than her husband; the two of them are buried in the Protestant cemetery at Douglas.

Irwin Patterson, who has lived most of his adult life at Forester's Falls about 15 miles north of his childhood home, has now donated his father's diary to the Public Archives in Ottawa. ◆



Ernest Mayer

The Historic Period in Canadian Eskimo Art

By Jean Blodgett

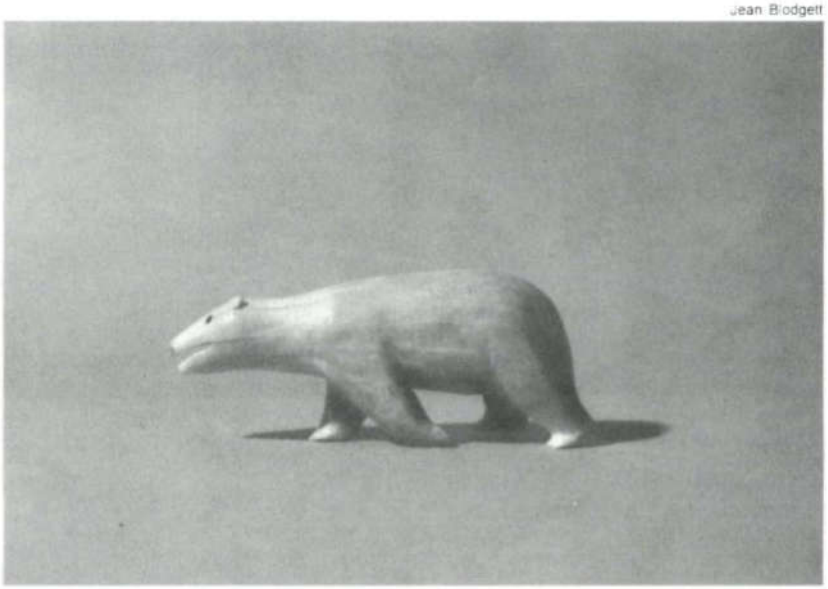
The author is curator of Eskimo art in the Winnipeg Art Gallery, and author of recently published 'The Coming and Going of the Shaman: Eskimo Shamanism and Art'.

THE HISTORY OF CANADIAN ESKIMO ART is usually divided into three major time periods, the prehistoric, historic, and contemporary; a chronology based on significant events within the sequence of arctic cultures. In Canada, the prehistoric period, which includes the Dorset, Thule and earlier cultures, extends from approximately 2000 B.C. to c. 1700 A.D. The historic period dates from the late 1700s and continues to 1948 when James Houston first visited the Arctic. Mr Houston's trip north and the very successful sale in Montreal of Eskimo artworks collected by him on a second trip in 1949 heralded the beginning of a new period in Eskimo art. Although previous attempts had been made earlier in the century to market Eskimo carvings, it was not until the late 1940s that conditions were ripe for such a development. The years since that time have been characterized by the consistent and ongoing production and exportation of artworks for sale in the South.

The contemporary period, defined as dating from the time of James Houston's first northern ventures and continuing to the present, is particularly well known, and the subject of increasing study and research. The work in this area is, in addition, supported by considerable documentation and

In the photograph above: model tools in ivory and metal, c. 1945, from Repulse Bay. Greatest length: 8.9 cm. Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, Winnipeg.

Jean Blodgett



Bear in ivory, 1925, from Cape Dorset. Height: 4.5 cm. Collected by J. Dewey Soper. National Museum of Man, Ottawa.

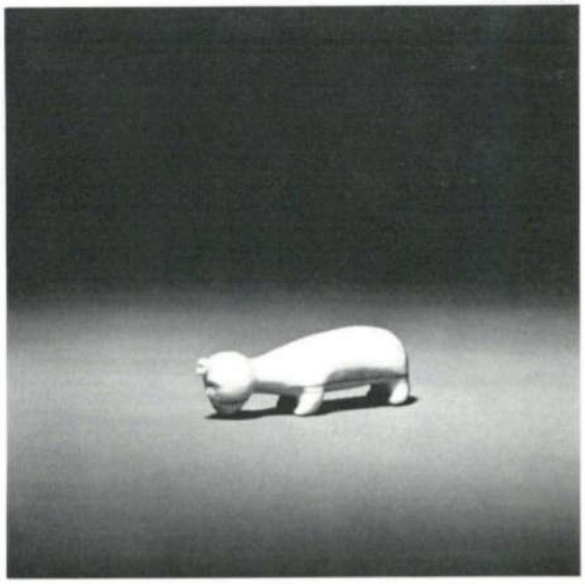
analysis of the Dorset and Thule cultures and their art, carried out primarily by archaeologists. Falling between these two major areas is the historic period, an ill-defined and poorly documented time span which is often only briefly acknowledged within the history of Inuit art.

It would appear that a number of factors have contributed to the historic period's particular position in Eskimo art history. In contrast to the scientific study of prehistoric archaeology and the accessibility of contemporary research, the historic phase is plagued with misconceptions and lack of visual data, as well as problems of definition, provenance, dating, and documentation. Not only has little been written about the art of this period, but only a few publications reproduce examples of the actual artworks.[1] As a result there is insufficient visual material readily available to provide the basis for thorough analysis and comparison. The lack of published information is not compatible with the volume of artifacts observed and collected during this period by explorers, whalers, ethnologists, anthropologists, missionaries, Hudson's Bay Company and government employees, and tourists, for we find that those working or travelling in the Arctic generally returned home with some memento of their sojourn in the North. Unfortunately much of the material which was acquired by private individuals remains inaccessible or unknown, and even collections in major institutions often came to the museums incompletely documented. With the exception of those collectors who were making a scientific study of the artifacts, the historic collector, in keeping with the attitude of the times, was usually unconcerned with documenting the object or its maker. The situation becomes somewhat better from 1850 on, and the early part of the 20th century is the most thoroughly documented of this period. The majority of works discussed and reproduced here date from the turn of the century or later.

In addition to the lack of precise and scientific collecting procedures and dearth of documentation, the historic period is, in itself, simply difficult to define. Two major events are inextricably tied with the development of the historic phase; the Little Ice Age (1600-1850) and white contact.[2] During the 17th century, an increasingly colder climate resulted in changes in animal populations and distribution. The Thule people responded to these new conditions by making considerable adaptations in their hunting technology and life-style. These developments significantly altered their traditional culture, in effect bringing to an end the Thule phase. At the same time, more and more outsiders were making their way to the Arctic. Not only were these foreigners able to record their travels, thus instituting our first written accounts, or history, of the arctic people, but they — like the climatic changes — had a significant effect on the indigenous population.

Explorers had ventured to the northern coasts of Canada since as early as about 1000 A.D., but these trips were sporadic and of short duration. By the mid-19th century, however, the traffic north in some areas had increased to such an extent that the Inuit were in continuous contact with non-Inuit.[3] The presence of these foreigners, particularly the whalers, missionaries and traders, had a tremendous influence on the traditional Inuit culture, for these outsiders came to stay, and they brought with them new jobs, new implements, new clothing and food, and a new religion.

Ernest Mayer

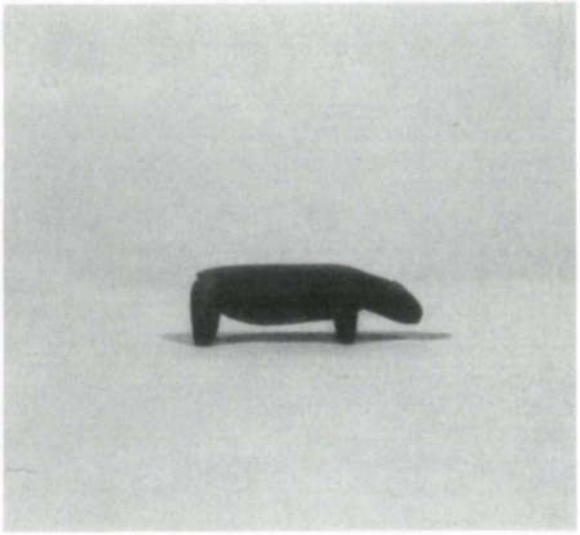


Bear with spirit head, in ivory, amulet, pre-1923, from Black Lead Island. Height: 2.1 cm. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

Ernest Mayer

Bears, c. 1915, in grey-brown stone from the west coast of Hudson Bay. Height: 3.4 cm. National Museum of Man, Ottawa.

Jean Blodgett



Bear, 1925, in horn, from Chesterfield Inlet. Height: 2.8 cm. National Museum of Man, Ottawa.

Yet the amount and duration of contact with outsiders varied considerably throughout the North; for example, in Labrador the Moravians established a permanent mission at Nain in 1771, while the Iglulik Eskimos were generally without steady contact until late in the 19th century. Thus one specific date for the beginning of white contact cannot be established, just as one date cannot be assigned to mark the end of the Thule culture. From 1600 on, the Inuit culture underwent considerable change as a result of both the climatic conditions and increasing association with non-Inuit, but this was a gradual process, and one which occurred in different parts of the Canadian Arctic at different times. The historic period, then, is one arising from cultural changes, and it is essentially a period of transition. The artworks from these years reflect this state of transition and change.

During the historic period, the Eskimo people, like their predecessors, continued to make decorated items and carvings (as well as unadorned, functional tools and equipment which are not considered here). These objects, which range from everyday implements to articles of special significance, include toys and games such as dolls and ayagaks or personal adornments and equipment such as ivory combs and pipes; and ceremonial and religious items: skin masks, head ornaments, shaman belts, amulets and fetishes.[4] It is important to note that not only were these objects made by the Inuit for their own use, but their crafting shows obvious signs of the attention devoted to non-functional and aesthetic concerns. The artifacts are sensitively decorated and adorned with patterns or representative figures, and complementary or unusual materials are used for finishing details. A number of the objects, particularly the carvings, are associated with the religious practices of the Inuit. For example, the bear, an animal often connected with shamanism as a popular helping spirit, is well represented in several different guises in the historic period.

An examination of these various bears, however, indicates yet another concern related to the carvings made during the historic period. Of the bears illustrated, the one from Cape Dorset is distinctive; it has a new, clean look to it, it has a more animated or illustrative quality, and it has protruding extremities which make it less of a contained unit than the bear from Chesterfield Inlet. In fact, the Cape Dorset bear does not look as if it has been used by the people who

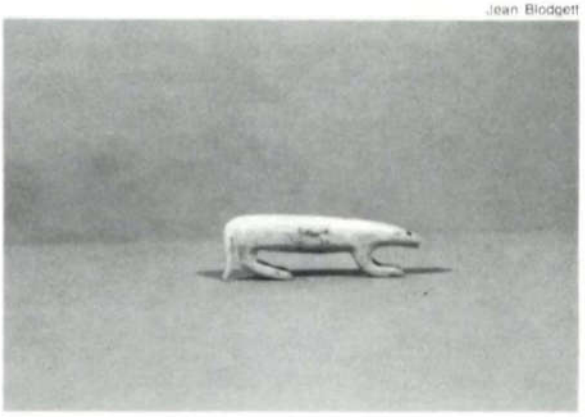
made it. This consideration, of the ultimate function of the object, is a major factor in the historic period. In contrast to the art objects made by the Inuit of this period for their own use, we find an even greater number of items which appear to have been made purely for sale or trade to non-Inuit. Although it is not always possible to establish with certainty whether the objects the Inuit made were intended for themselves or not, those things destined for the outsiders are generally characterized by such factors as an unused look, a free-standing and more open sculptural form with protruding extremities thus making the object more suited to display than to being handled or held, orientation to a base, untraditional or even alien function or subject matter, and an illustrative quality. As we have seen, from the early 1800s on, there was a marked increase in the traffic north, and these visitors acquired virtually any and all objects that they could from the Inuit, stimulated by scientific investigation, simple curiosity, or the desire for souvenirs and mementoes. The presence of these outsiders and their modern equipment, as well as their acquisitiveness, influenced the culture they observed, and the Inuit began to produce objects which were of no use to themselves, but which were predestined for sale to the visitors.

Although their function had thus changed, many of the artworks still represented traditional and indigenous subjects. Whether as a result of a request or search for information on the buyer's part, or as a result of his own familiarity with such subjects, the Inuit artist often depicted things and events within his native tradition and experience. In keeping with the concerns of a hunting economy, the carvers depicted the various animals of the North, including musk-oxen, caribou, walrus, seals, whales, narwhals, bears and even fish, dogs, hares and birds.[5] In addition to these single representations, the artists also turned their attention to some fairly complex hunting and animal scenes,[6] usually portraying the action on a large, single piece of ivory, but in some instances using separate parts to compose the scene. The artists also depicted themselves and their fellow men in a striking variety of representative poses and attitudes; in groups, alone, or engaged in domestic tasks.[7] Models were also popular, and we find a number of examples of small-scale igloos, sleds and kayaks,[8] some of which are embellished with very fine and minutely detailed hunting equipment. In fact, there are all kinds of precisely finished miniature models of implements such as harpoons, spears, ulus, knives, scrapers, fishing jiggers and snow-shovels. The attention to detail in these implements and models, as well as the realistic and animate carvings of the people and animals of the North, seem to suggest an illustrative intent on the part of the maker, as though he was trying to show outsiders his native culture and environment.

Tom Prescott

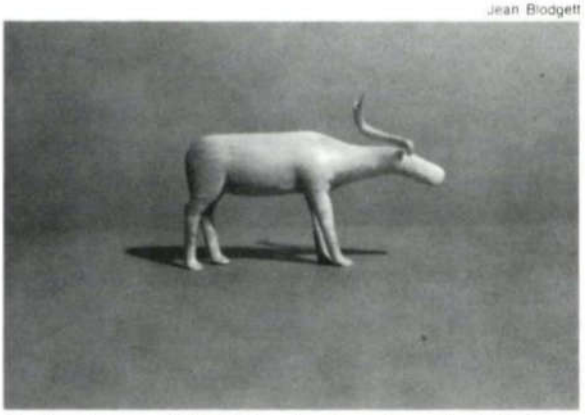
Musk-ox in grey stone and horn. Presented to Dr. I. E. Borden, physician on 'Neptune' wintering at Cape Fullerton on the west coast of Hudson Bay, 1903-04. Height: 6.5 cm. National Museum of Man, Ottawa.

Jean Blodgett

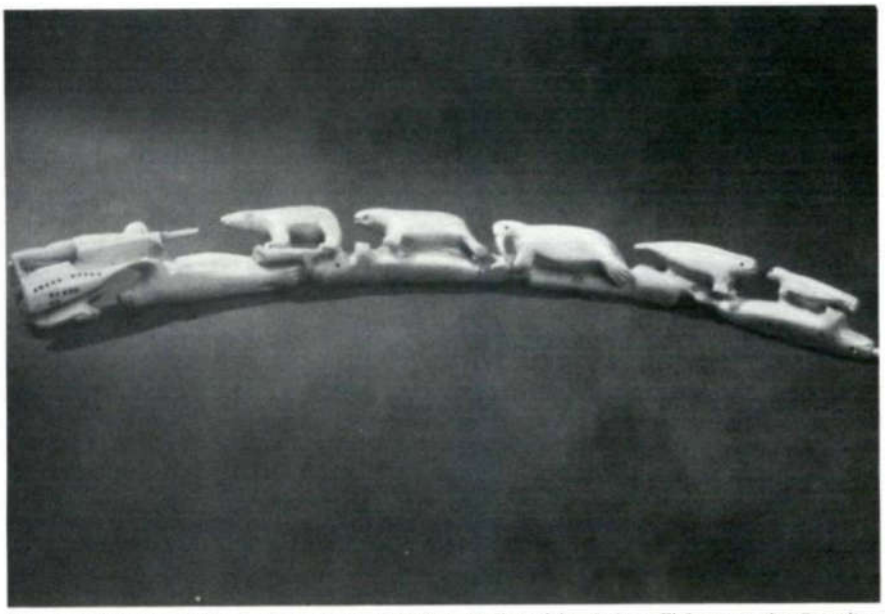


Dog in ivory, c. 1920 from North Baffin Island. Collected by R. J. Kidston. National Museum of Man, Ottawa.

Jean Blodgett

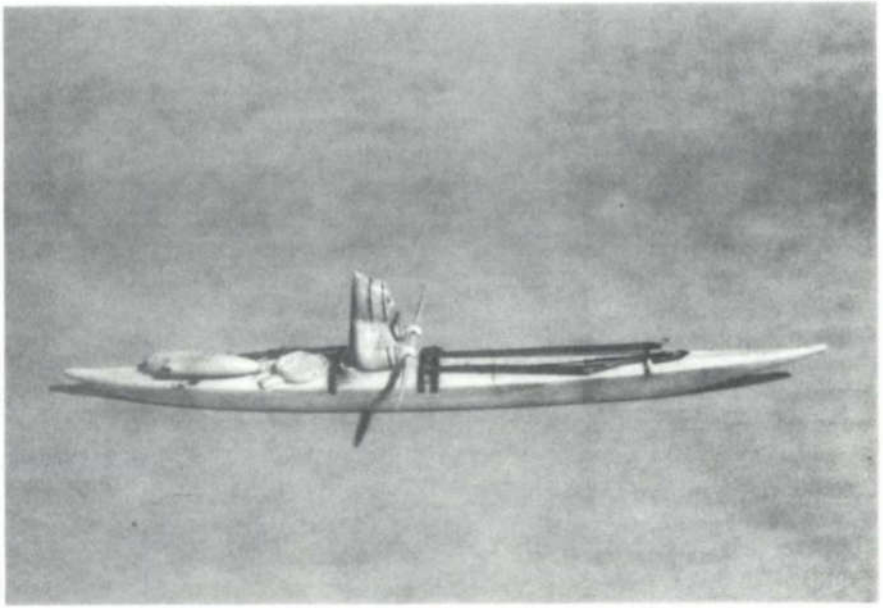


Caribou in ivory, 1925. Collected at Cape Dorset by J. D. Soper during a period of research. National Museum of Man, Ottawa.

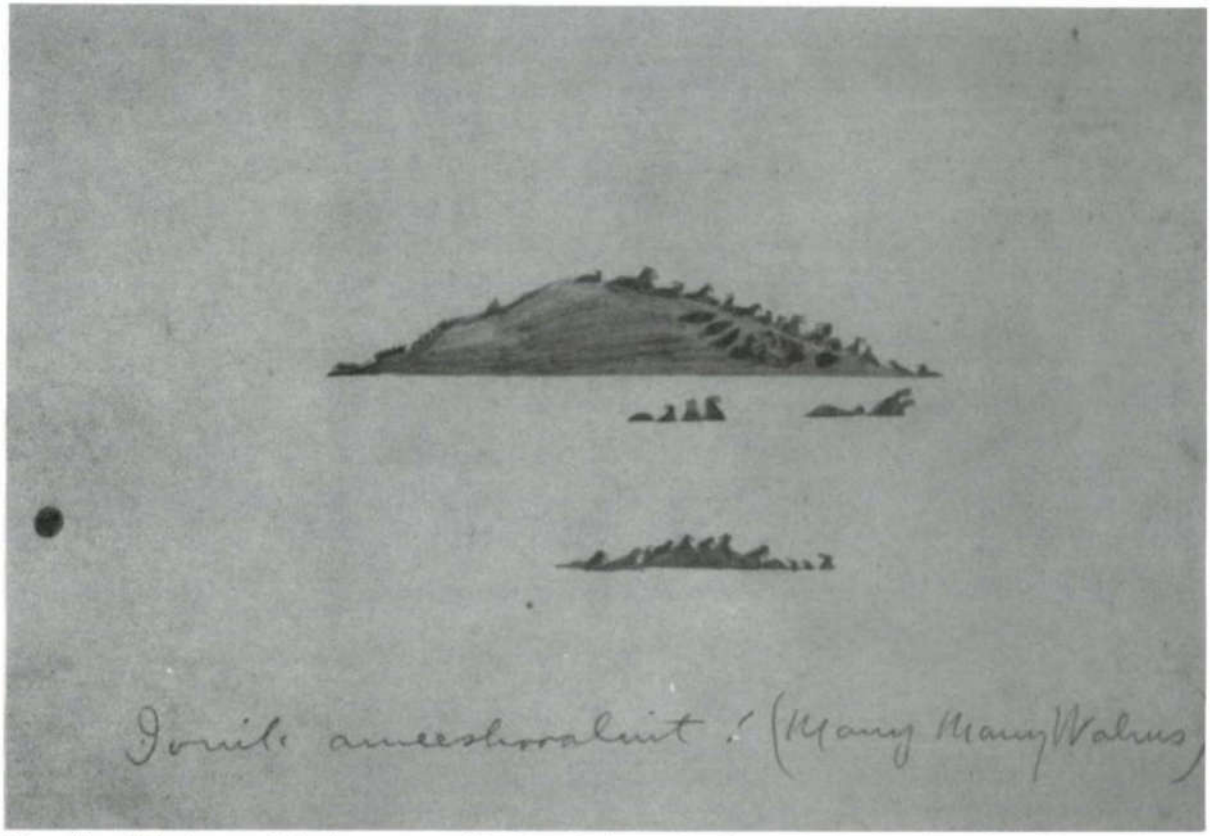


Scene with hunter and animals in ivory. Pre-1914. Collected by Robert Flaherty in the Canadian Eastern Arctic. Length: 41.5 cm. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

Jean Blodgett



Model kayak, in ivory with wood, hide, metal and sinew 1924. Collected by L. T. Burwash, Cape Dorset. Length: 22.9 cm. National Museum of Man, Ottawa.



'Many Many Walrus', a pencil sketch on paper, c. 1914 from the Eastern Canadian Arctic. Size 20 x 26 cm. Royal Ontario Museum.

At the same time during this period, traditional technical skills were also employed in the making of a variety of novel commodities. The women's sewing expertise was turned to use in the making of such salable items as fully costumed dolls or the elaborate skin rug collected by I. O. (later Bishop) Stringer in the Herschel Island / Mackenzie River area during the late 19th century. In some instances, the outsider requested a particular item or provided the necessary materials for something special. This is the case with the various pencil sketches and drawings solicited and collected by a number of northern visitors. Explorers were aided by the accuracy and completeness of the maps they requested,[9] and the ethnologists' research was aided by their hosts' depictions of spirits and other creatures not visible in this worldly realm.[10] Robert Flaherty returned from his northern ventures with an impressive collection of pencil scenes, and the artist James Houston shared his sketchbook with an Inuit draughtsman. The Eskimos' ability to so successfully make use of an alien medium reflects their highly developed visual / manual coordination, their three-dimensional carving skills, their two-dimensional experience — dating back to prehistoric times — in the making of incised motifs on flat ivory and stone surfaces, and their adaptability to new media, new technology and new subjects.

Not all the craftsmen felt equally confident with the two-dimensional media, and in some cases the request for a pencil drawing might result in a carving instead. Mathiassen describes an incident involving Knud Rasmussen and the Iglulik shaman Aua, in which the famous explorer gave Aua a piece of paper and pencil and asked him to make a drawing of an episode the latter had been describing. 'Aua sat with the pencil in his hand for an hour without anything coming of the drawing; then he laid it down and said he would rather carve it in ivory, that would be easier. Six months later he produced the carving . . . which is intended to illustrate the scene he described: A male walrus and three females drifting on an ice-floe, whilst Aua watches them from land through a telescope; his wife and child sit by his side.'[11]

Certainly most people seem to have preferred the traditional sculptural form, but even so they did not always restrict their choice of materials, size, or subject matter to the indigenous or familiar. In his carving, Aua portrays himself using an imported piece of equipment, the telescope. Many of the implements brought north by the outsiders — particularly telescopes, rifles and certain tools — were of invaluable assistance to the Inuit in their day-to-day activities, and it was not long before these items were integrated into the culture and into the artistic subject

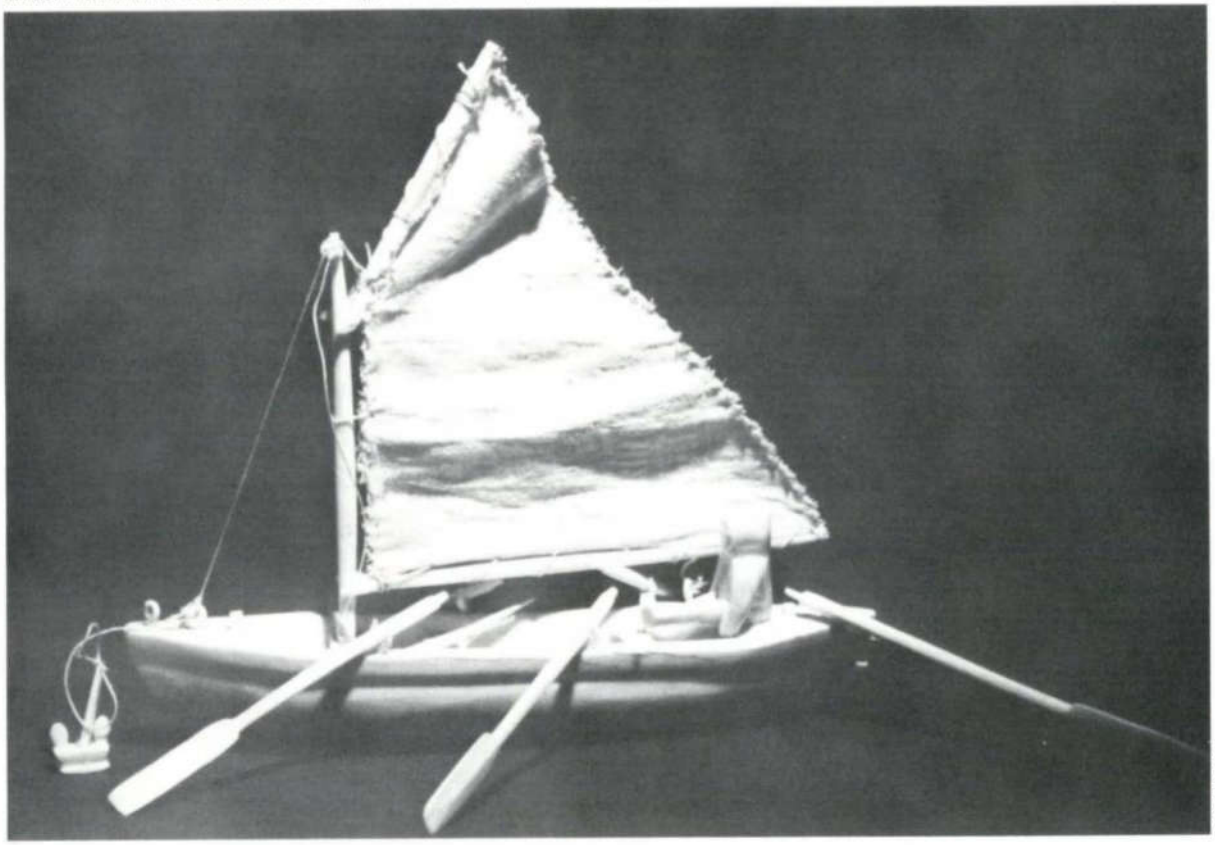
Father Marcel Rio examines a soapstone carving in the Eskimo Museum at Churchill, Manitoba, in 1956.

Manitoba Archives

Model snow-shovel in bone, horn, metal, gut and sinew; from Repulse Bay. Length: 14.6 cm. Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, Winnipeg.

Ernest Mayer

Model whaleboat in ivory, linen and string, c. 1945, from Repulse Bay. Height: 21.5 cm. Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, Winnipeg.



Ernest Mayer

matter. Just as he made tiny replicas of his own traditional equipment, the Inuit artist turned his carving skills to the making of miniature models representing alien objects — many of which he had adopted for his own use, others which he saw the foreigner himself using. Thus we find carvings of such items as fox traps, saws, tools, axes, rifles, jack-knives, scissors, eating utensils and salt and pepper shakers.[12] Some of these carvings were very detailed and painstakingly elaborate replicas, such as the model primus stove and the whaleboat and ship models complete with rigging, sails, anchors and human occupants. The Inuit also recorded their new religion with carvings of Christ and the Madonna.[13] In addition to the rather extensive selection of trade models, the Inuit craftsmen also made carvings for the foreigners' own use or specifically intended as souvenirs. These include such items as letter knives, bookmarks, canes, cigarette holders, ashtrays, dice, brooches, rings, and the ever-popular cribbage boards.[14] Although many of these objects were made of ivory and remained on a fairly small scale, in keeping with traditional size and media, some of the works were of substantial dimensions and were made of stone or contained such unusual elements as cloth, string, beads and colouring.

Having examined some of the representative carvings and artifacts from the historic period, it is hard to reconcile their overall variety, quality, originality, quantity and technique with many of the statements made by northern visitors of the 19th and early 20th century. In general, these travellers were not impressed with the artistic accomplishments of their hosts, and they commented upon the decline in carving production and expertise. For example, Mathiassen states: 'On the whole the Iglulik Eskimos are not very skilful at carving; there are, however, exceptions . . . but among the younger men this art is in a state of rapid decline.'[15] Franz Boas remarks that 'the artistic value of the old work made before white contact is considerably greater than that of the recent work of the natives of this region'[16] (west coast of Hudson Bay), and according to Jenness, 'carving in ivory had died out in many districts before the opening of this century.'[17]

Certainly, not all the observers were without praise for the artifacts which they observed, but the majority of comments were disparaging or negative, and at best unenthusiastic. Needless to say, there are uninspired and poorly carved works from the historic period as there are from any era, yet the evaluations made by the 19th and early 20th century writers seem unduly harsh — particularly when one views the actual artworks. The conclusions of these historic observers would necessarily have been influenced by certain factors such as the small sampling of artwork they individually observed, the particular tastes and views of their times with regard both to art and native populations, and their own presence in the North. The pressure exerted by their proximity could account for certain phenomena they observed; the crudeness of carvings may have resulted from the haste with which the items were made for trade on the spot; the subjects may have been influenced by their preferences in purchase; and the scarcity of objects may have resulted from overtrading or an unwillingness to co-operate, or secretiveness, especially with regard to religious artifacts. In addition, we should recognize that the specialities of these observers were not within the field of art or art criticism. Nevertheless, their conclusions have not been without influence in subsequent discussions of Eskimo art, and one cannot ignore this influence or the contribution made by their observations. On the basis of increasingly available visual data, however, it would appear that the time has come to reassess the art of the Inuit made between the Thule and contemporary phases.

A review of historic period artworks indicates that their qualities have gone unrecognized or underrated in the past. As the pieces referred to here illustrate, the 19th and early to mid-20th century Eskimos made a wide variety of artifacts, characterized by a sensitivity and feeling for media, design and colour, an attention to the significant and meaningful detail, ingenuity and imagination, as well as an overall technical expertise. Such characteristics are not unique to the historic period; they are equally prevalent in other periods of Eskimo art history. We find, in fact, that the artworks made in the time span between the prehistoric and contemporary eras have a number of qualities in common with works made both before and after.

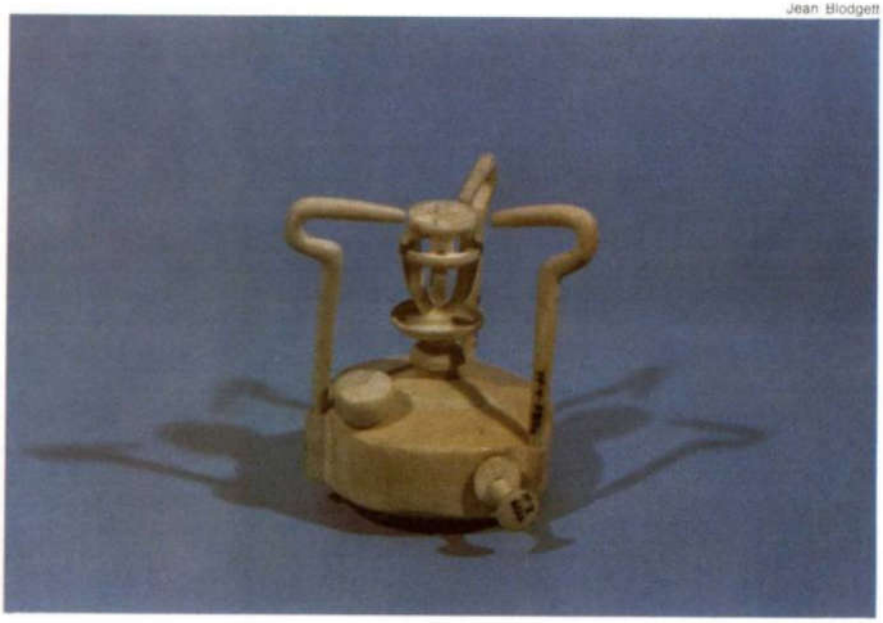
The similarities and continuities in subject matter, techniques, formats and meaning evident throughout the entire history of Eskimo art make abundantly clear the very significant role of the historic phase as a link between the prehistoric and contemporary periods. Many artistic traditions from prehistoric times were maintained by the historic period artists, passed on to their successors, and have continued in use up until the present. On the other hand, external forces made the historic period one of change and adaptation; this state of transition, with new influences and elements, actually enriched and enhanced an already strong visual tradition. Artists of historic times adapted and utilized novel materials, subjects and techniques, and began to make artworks for a new purpose — innovations that were also passed on to succeeding generations. The historic period, then, can be characterized as one of transition on the one hand, and continuity on the other.

Ernest Mayer

Two women carrying container, in ivory with colouring. Pre-1890. Collected by Chief Factor H.M.S. Cotter, in North-eastern Labrador. Height: 5.8 cm. Collection of Mr and Mrs George S. Cotter.

The author is continuing to research and document the Canadian Eskimo art of the historic period. She would appreciate hearing from those who have art collected prior to 1958.

Jean Blodgett



Model primus stove in ivory, from the Eastern Canadian Arctic in the 1930s. Height: 8 cm. National Museum of Man, Ottawa.

FOOTNOTES

1. For further information on the historic period, see Charles A. Martijn, "Canadian Eskimo Carving in Historical Perspective," *Anthropos*, Vol. 59 (1964), pp. 546-96 [text only] and George Swinton, *Sculpture of the Eskimo* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1972), pp. 119-22 [text and some illustrations]. The *Sculpture/Inuit* exhibition catalogue (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), includes illustrations of a number of historic pieces.
2. For a more extensive discussion of this transition and the pre-historic period in general, see Robert McGhee, *Canadian Arctic Prehistory*, Archaeological Survey of Canada, National Museum of Man (Toronto: Van Nostrand Reinhold Ltd., 1978).
3. See W. Gillies Ross, *Whaling and Eskimos: Hudson Bay 1860-1915*, National Museum of Man, Publications in Ethnology, No. 10 (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1975).
4. For additional illustrations see Jean Blodgett, *The Coming and Going of the Shaman: Eskimo Shamanism and Art* (Winnipeg: The Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1979), pp. 166, 168, 170, 171, 192, 193; Franz Boas, *Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay*, American Museum of Natural History, Bulletin XV (1901), p. 107; E. W. Hawkes, *The Labrador Eskimo*, Canadian Geological Survey, Memoir 91, Anthropological Series No. 14 (1916), p. 233; *Sculpture/Inuit*, illus. no. 30, 40, 41; and Swinton, *Sculpture of the Eskimo*, p. 121.
5. See *Sculpture/Inuit*, illus. no. 74, 75, 84, 89, 129, 135, 149.
6. *Ibid.*, illus. no. 150, 151.
7. *Ibid.*, illus. no. 25, 55, 91, 94, 95, 227.
8. *Ibid.*, illus. no. 96, 233.
9. See, for example, Frank Speck, "Eskimo Collection from Baffin Land and Ellesmere Land," *Indian Notes*, Vol. 1, no. 3 (July, 1924), Pl. VI.
10. See, for example, the illustrations in Knud Rasmussen, *Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos*, Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition 1921-24, Vol. VII, no. 1. (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag, 1930).
11. Therkel Mathiassen, *Material Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos*, Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition 1921-24, Vol. VI, no. 1 (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag, 1928), pp. 104-05, fig. 60.
12. For additional illustrations see *Sculpture/Inuit*, illus. no. 90, 100.
13. See Jean Blodgett, *Looking South* (Winnipeg: The Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978), no. 30.
14. *Ibid.*, no. 28, 29, 42, 45 (described in the catalogue, but not illustrated).
15. Mathiassen, *Material Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos*, pp. 104-05.
16. Boas, *Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay*, p. 460.
17. Diamond Jenness, *Eskimo Administration. II. Canada*. Arctic Institute of North America, Technical Paper No. 14 (May, 1964), p. 112. ◆

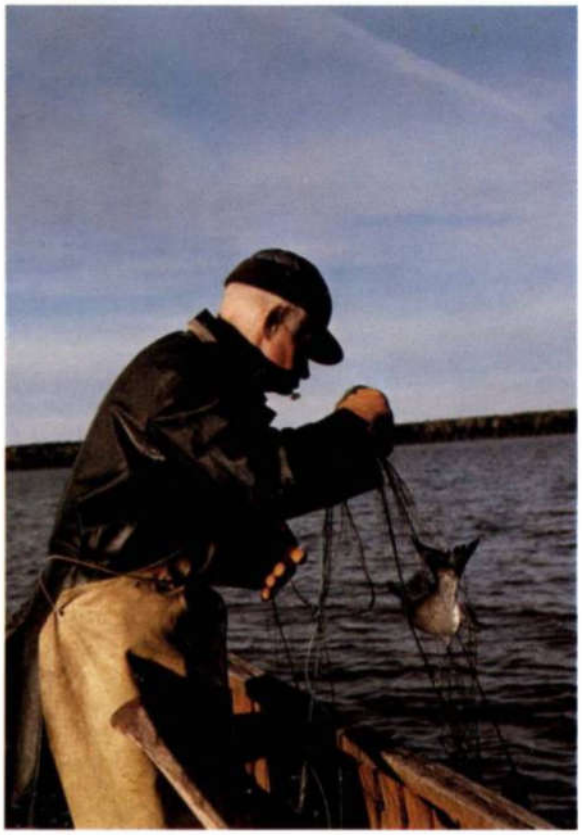
David Barbour

Rug of sealskin, polar bear fur, otter, muskrat, male and female Common Eider duck, male Red Throated or Arctic loon, caribou hide, cotton and sinew. Pre-1901. 135 x 119 cm. Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, Winnipeg.

Oscar Peterson, Fisherman

Text and Photographs by Scott Landis

The author has lived, worked and travelled in northern Ontario for the past seven years.



Commercial fisherman Oscar Peterson lifts a net alongside the canoe.

Saturday, September 17 . . . ***Listening is one of the principal pastimes of the bush. On plane days, there is a pervasive element of nervous tension and expectancy that envelops all of our activities. With 2,000 pounds of fish on ice in the cooler waiting for a flight out to town, the pressure intensifies. Today, there is a low ceiling, socked-in mist and no one really expects a plane. Nonetheless, we stiffen at every growl from the dogs or at the merest change in the wind's pitch.***

FISHING has always been a precarious occupation. The fact that it is Oscar Peterson's livelihood is almost incidental: Oscar does not fish merely to make a living; he fishes in order to live in the bush. So, if the whitefish spawn is not as long or as heavy as he hopes for, or if frequent fall storms make it difficult to reach and lift the walleye nets, Oscar's livelihood may be made more marginal but it can somehow be reconciled.

Oscar Peterson is a man on whom 65 years has had a honing effect. Most of the time, his spare frame and wispy, white hair are well camouflaged beneath multiple layers of jackets, heavy fishing slickers and an assortment of headgear. He handles 100-pound tubs of fish, 45-gallon gas drums and all the other attendant burdens of commercial fishing with an ease belying his age. He is a soft-spoken, gentle man, something of a rarity among the breed of bush men to which he belongs.

Oscar has been commercial fishing on Birch Lake, 90 miles north of Sioux Lookout, Ontario, since the 1940s and, after 30 years, a man tends to develop a system. Oscar's fishing season boils down to August, September and October although he has, on occasion, set nets earlier or later. His old friend and one-time fishing partner of the 40s and 50s, Fred Rodman, used to take half his catch in the spring and half in the fall.

'You can fish the summer' Oscar says, 'but the fish are deep and you need twice the amount of ice to keep them.' When he has set nets early, Oscar has had to carry ice in the boat. Fall is also the season of the spawn for the whitefish, which comprises 70 per cent of the allotment on Oscar's licence. During the spawn, the whitefish habits and locations become increasingly predictable. But September and October in Northwest Ontario can cut two ways: in exchange for the spawn and the absence of bugs and blowflies, you might receive days on end of spitting rain or snow and wind and cloud cover that make net-lifting and plane-landing arduous, if not treacherous. The nearest limited access road to Birch Lake is some 45 miles and

three to five portages removed by water. Human enterprise in the region, once restricted to the canoe, now glides on the more costly and temperamental wings of aircraft.

I fished with Oscar last fall on a schedule which called for a Norseman every four days, weather permitting. The Norseman is that single-prop, canvas-covered craft of distinction, a work-horse of almost heroic proportions for its role in countless bush 'campaigns'. Its payload is 1,600 pounds. For three men, Oscar, Bruce Smith and myself, working eight to ten 100-yard gill nets, 400 pounds per day would be an easy catch in most years. But last season was not like most.

Sunday night, September 18 . . . Bedded down and trying to relax into sleep but rolling instead to the rhythm of the surf drumming the beach not 15 yards to the east of my cabin. The six compact log cabins that comprise the living quarters of Oscar's camp are strung out only 20-30 feet apart on a narrow, sandy spit which juts northward into the easternmost bay of Birch Lake. Fully exposed to both the east and the west, the camp becomes the recipient of all the glories of the sun's daily entrance and exit, as well as the brunt of North-west Ontario's weather.

About seven years ago, Percy, a Cat Lake Indian who was guiding for tourist fishermen on the lake, left three pups with Oscar in the fall with the instructions that they should be shot. Oscar, not even possessing a gun, was hardly capable of shooting a trio of helpless animals that he'd been feeding and enjoying all summer. So, the dogs remained, and multiplied. Many generations and drownings later, Oscar now has seven intimately related, undisciplined canines who control his life at least as much as he does theirs. All seven sleep with Oscar in his one-room log cabin. He keeps a mattress on the floor for some and the others arrange themselves, according to status, around him on the bed.

The open door policy is in effect during all seasons but winter. The dogs come and go as they please. In winter, Oscar spends a fair portion of his time shuffling back and forth the 10 feet from the bed to the door and doling out charitable hunks of canned meat to his favourites from the mountains of canned goods stacked on the floor between the airtight heater and the dogs' mattress. When he leaves the lake in winter, which he does perhaps two or three times for rarely more than one or two days and a night at a time, he, of course, leaves the door to his cabin propped open (40° below notwithstanding). There will be plenty of food in the pot and the radio left on — full volume. 'It makes the puppies feel less lonesome, you know.' They know he won't be gone for very long. In Oscar's 30 years on Birch Lake, he has shot only one moose. That was to feed the dogs.

6:00 a.m., September 22. . . A knock on the door of my cabin and a whispered 'Good morning' informs me that Oscar is up and we are about to get rolling. There's the barest hint of dawn in my east window. I make my way to the kitchen with the Coleman lantern. Inside, Bruce and Oscar are at the table, wood cookstove humming, coffee on, tea water boiling. Oscar has brewed up his favourite crew's breakfast: oatmeal with eggs porridge ('egg foo gruel'). We sit, mostly silent, or quietly discussing who will move which nets where, and gradually waking up.

Pontoons riding low in the water, a Norseman taxis away with 1,600 pounds of fresh fish.

Generally, Oscar is off first — a solitary outboard whining into the calm of pre-dawn — he'll try to reach his most exposed nets before the wind stacks up the water around them, before the gulls get at them if they are shallow, before the tourist boats chew them up if they are in well-travelled passages, before the plane comes if it's plane day.

These days, with a load of fish on ice, Oscar relaxes his pace. We all leave together in the big boat, the 20-foot square-stern canoe with an 18-horse Evinrude kicker. It's a half-hour ride to the protected reefs and boulder beds behind Iron Island at the entryway to Birch Narrows. There we disperse into three smaller freighter canoes to tend our respective nets.

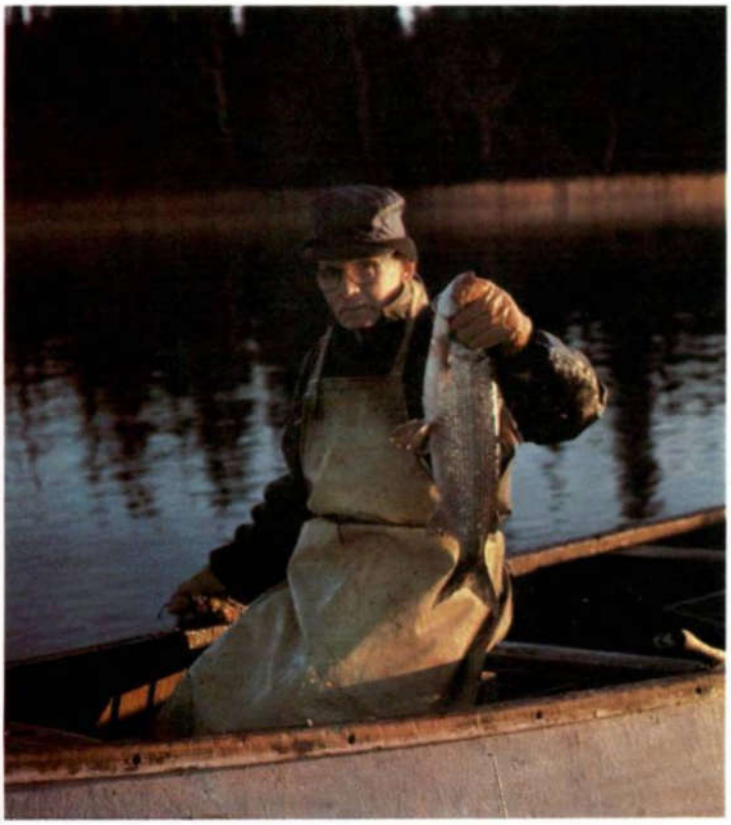
So resumes the eternal whitefish vigil. Oscar the supreme optimist and whitefish logician shrugs his shoulders. He has been juggling nets around the lake in myriad formations and directions, like a football coach trying to crack an elusive offense. And, in this ballpark, it sometimes feels as if we are on the defense; the fish call the shots and we try to be there. When I raised the question 'Who runs whose lives, we, the whitefish or they, ours?' Oscar did not have to pause when he replied 'Both'.

We've fished the weeds, we've tried the boulder beds, the mud bays, the 'holes' — now it's to the reef (the last resort Oscar warns). There the nets will remain until the whitefish come. Bruce pulled half a tub (50 pounds) of whites from five nets this morning. Oscar declared they were 'getting sharp', referring to the spots on the head and the bumps on the flank which indicate a readiness to spawn. So we returned to the Narrows this afternoon to reset for whitefish in a solid string of nine nets (900 yards of uninterrupted fishnet). There they'll remain and here we'll wait — weather watching (the cold apparently enhances the spawn) and fish waiting, pulling in our meagre 100-200 pounds of whitefish a day. Oscar recalls when he and Fred Rodman and Otto Young used to fish together.

'Lots of times we had two men gutting and Fred running the nets. Keep two men in the fish house busy all morning. Sure. It was nothing to get 1,000 pounds of fish in a morning, you know.'

Lifting nets can take anywhere from two hours to all morning, depending on the size of the catch, the wind and the condition of the nets. On the rare occasions when the weather has been so dirty that a net has been untended for a couple of days, the resulting tangle of dead and sometimes rotting fish and logs with the boulders of an uneven bottom can cause time-consuming and irreparable damage to the nets. But, more often, net lifting is a straightforward routine. Beginning at one end of the net, marked by a bobbing line of plastic floats which disappear in a string towards the depths, and seated in the bow of the boat, the fisherman passes the net over the gunwales and his lap, picking out and sorting fish.

In the 1940s Oscar and his partner would take 1,000 pounds of whitefish from Birch Lake in a morning. Today the catch is 400 pounds a day.



Whitefish and pickerel (walleyes) are the principal harvest with northern pike and occasional lake trout as a by-product. Other, less saleable by-products: sucker (mullet), ling (burbot) and tullibee (cisco, lake herring), which are harvested in a volume approximately equal to that of the more desirable species, are set aside to be unceremoniously dumped with the fish guts. One quickly becomes inured to this obvious waste as one becomes embroiled in the practical realities of the trade. These realities are, in fishing, as in any other business, closely linked with time, money and the facility of production. Actually, these fish are not unmarketable and efforts to utilize them are periodically put forth by the marketing agency. Such efforts tend to fall flat. In an isolated area, where freight costs are about equal to the value-to-the-fisherman of northern pike, a commonly desirable fish, those other species whose values are not even that marginal, are clearly not worth the effort. They become 'coarse' fish, a commodity to be avoided or dispatched with haste.

Whether lifting or setting nets, Oscar exudes concentrated energy. Retrieving his eyeglasses from beneath folds of clothing, and fortified with a pinch of snuff, he will patiently settle down to the toughest of 'spinners'. Large jackfish (pike) present the greatest problem due to their tendency to roll enormous quantities of net, leads and floats around their long, thin bodies. Oscar complains that when you've been working on such a badly rolled jack 'sometimes you can't even find the fish by the time you're through' for all the slime they excrete. But a fisherman's catch isn't always fish. Ducks, seagulls and even otters have surfaced in the nets. Oscar worked for 45 minutes the other day to extricate a baby merganser which had become enmeshed in a walleye net. The duck pecked furiously at his arm throughout the entire ordeal. Setting a net off the south point of Canoe Island, Oscar kept catching the cuff buttons of his shirt in the mesh. (It was warm and he had shed his customary slicker). He finally whipped out his fish knife and cut them off. 'There! That'll teach you!'

After all nets have been lifted, we head directly back to the fish house. Greeted on the dock by the full regiment of Oscar's pups, we unload and begin gutting and icing down as quickly as possible to ensure quality fish. Prior to the advent of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation (FFMC), the fish were cleaned whichever way the buyers wanted them: round (untouched), gutted and gilled or headless-dressed.

Now, the caprices of the world market are all funnelled through the one agency whose responsibility it is to advise the fisherman of any changing preferences in fish handling.

Two years ago, after sending out about 2,000 pounds of walleyes to Red Lake and receiving a succession of receipts indicating that the vast majority had been labelled 'cutter', Oscar began to worry. He prides himself on the quality of his fish, their size, cleaning, icing and overall handling. But this meant not only a blow to his pride but a loss of 7¢ a pound or $140.00. He chartered a plane and sent Bruce out to investigate — only to discover that the processers were no longer paying premium prices for pickerel whose body cavities had been scraped. No warning was ever given him beforehand to prepare him for this modification.

Only after the day's catch has been safely packed in the cooler and layered with shaved lake ice (the product of Oscar's March activity), will we knock off for lunch. If it is plane day, we'll probably pack the day's catch, along with all of the remaining fish in the cooler, into the tubs in which they'll be loaded into the plane — on the odd chance that the plane arrives early. When the plane does arrive, no time is lost in getting it loaded and on its way back to town.

After lunch there's always something that needs doing — motor repair, gas-mixing, pulling, straightening or moving nets. In setting nets, there's a fine line between a good and a bad set. If it's too tight the fish will hit it and back off rather than attempt to swim through; if it's too loose when they hit, they spin and roll the net into endless tangles or, even without the fish, simply wind-rolls. Perhaps the net is too deep and the whitefish are up. Or it's too shallow and the whites are still down. Or too many boulders which means too many trout, which are also beginning their spawn and are, as of 15 September, illegal catch unless dead in the net. And boulders mean rough snags on the bottom. Or it is too smooth and the whites are beginning to hit the shallow, reef-spawning beds.

'You can't set a net just anywhere, you know. Some places just won't catch fish' Oscar says. He knows this lake as if he'd been given a privileged peek at it drained of water: where the holes are, the reefs, the channels, the spawning beds. But even so, much of fishing is trial and error. We set a net. Try it twice, maybe three times, and then move it if it doesn't fish.

When Oscar arrived by immigrant boat at Halifax in 1932, he was 19 years old and, by his own admission, a little wet behind the ears.

'The old man paid the fare to get rid of me, I guess' he grins. Raised on a family farm in Sweden with too much family and not enough farm, he and a friend struck out from Göteborg to see a piece of the world. 'I told them I'd be back in four to five years' he recalls. 'I've been here forty-five.'

As the canoe approaches camp, a reception committee of Oscar's pups appears on the shore.

A morning's haul — 200 pounds of fish to be cleaned and iced down.

Fresh fish on ice are shipped to Red Lake and then to the market in the South.

But the only piece of the world he saw for a full two years after his voyage and train ride west from Halifax, was the panorama a man might receive while working on a Canadian National Railways section gang in Y-Cliff, a bush camp east of Sioux Lookout, Ontario. Two years (at 38¢ an hour) and countless lay-offs and 'bumpings' later, he changed scenery and came to Birch Lake to cut cordwood for the Jason-Casey Mountain gold mine (Casummit Lake Mine). He moved around the area during the 30s, worked underground at Central Pat (Pickle Crow) Mine, on surface claims, hand-steeling and trenching at Springpole Lake, manned a fire tower on Uchi Lake and went underground again until he finally quit in 1939 to dabble in prospecting, trapping, diamond-drilling and wood-cutting through the 40s.

Gradually, Oscar was drawn to Birch Lake. In 1948, he opened his sawmill there to supply the Casummit Lake Mine with lumber. He sawed the 24' 12"x12" timber for the head frame, cribbing for the stopes, ties, everything from 1" to timbers. He used a 40-horse tractor to power the mill and a much-loved horse to haul logs and lumber. He managed to keep a crew of four to five men employed when times were good. But those times were short-lived. Jason Mine began cutting back production in 1950, when it was already closed as far as lumber was concerned. By 1952, it was closed completely. Oscar leans forward in his chair, with his hands clenched tightly together over his knees and continues:

'I bet you it would've been going today if they'd've had some way . . . everything was too expensive. Air and tractor-train was all we had. Gold was low — only $35.00 an ounce.' With the clarity of 30 years of hindsight, he enjoys sawing even more than fishing: 'It's a little more clean. No suckers, jackfish. It's interesting. Everything goes good. Nobody got hurt.' But, when the mine closed, there was nobody to saw for on Birch Lake and it somehow never seemed worth while to leave the bush to pursue the livelihood. So, fishing grew to fill the void. Oscar had put everything into the mill and lost it all much faster. Even his horse, that he must have loved and pampered as he does his dogs now, was given away.

Oscar first fished on Birch Lake in the late 1940s. He learned the trade from and along with his Finlander friend, Fred Rodman, who began fishing just a few weeks earlier. Fred was not Canadian and so was not able to hold his own licence at the time. Robert A. Cooley held it for him and, in the early 1950s, took it over himself. With Fred and Otto Young, Oscar fished for Cooley for seven to eight years. Fishing was different in those days. Oscar remembered normal catches two or three times as large as today's. He recalls getting two to three tubs (200-300 pounds) of fish on a single net instead of the one tub which we hope for now. When Rodman began fishing there were no limits. A limit was imposed by the time Cooley was fishing at 20,000 pounds per year. It's been the same ever since. Oscar's limit includes 14,000 pounds of whitefish, 6,000 pounds of walleyes and a token 500 pounds of lake trout to account for the inevitable trout in the nets.

As strongly as many tourist fishermen point their finger at him, Oscar considers sport fishing to be at the root of the decline. 'They keep all the little ones' he claims and his nets, with a 4½"-5" mesh, selectively extract only the larger fish. He claims, also, that fishing never diminished until the 1960s when tourists first arrived in numbers.

'You take walleyes and northern and trout [the sportfish] and no whitefish, sucker and ling [the commercial fishing products]' he points out, 'it'd be a funny lake. You gotta keep 'em levelled off, you know.'

When Oscar feels his fishing tenure on Birch Lake endangered, he retreats to a stance of extreme caution. Fishing is his bread and butter and fish management is as important to him as holding a job is to someone else. In these times of stretched resources, there are changes taking place in the regulations surrounding commercial fishing that even an experienced bureaucrat must struggle to keep abreast of. For a man raised in a foreign country who has lived all of his adult life in the bush, such changes and the legions of bureaucrats needed to implement them, are more to be avoided than courted, on the instinctive principle that 'no news is good news'. So, when conservation officers made five separate flights to Oscar's dock last summer, 'intimidated' might be a mild description of his response.

Legally, Oscar is permitted to sell whitefish anywhere, while northern pike and walleyes because of marginally dangerous levels of mercury, must be sold only to the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation

(FFMC). Friends and tourists have long been in the habit of buying fish from Oscar in quantities to pack away in their freezers. But, early last summer, one tourist, wanting to take home some extra walleyes, came to Oscar. Oscar didn't have any nets in the lake at the time so the man asked if Oscar would fill out a fish slip of sale which would legitimize the 15-30 extra pounds of pickerel he would then be able to catch himself. Strictly speaking, this common practice is illegal because it allows the sport fisherman to exceed his six walleye and six northern per diem angling limit. In addition, since the introduction of the FFMC 'fish blending program', the sale of contaminated walleyes had been restricted to that agency.

'Fish blending' is one of those elusive terms which people seem hard-pressed to define. It conjures up visions of gargantuan hoppers into which both mercury-contaminated and non-contaminated fish are dumped, ground and processed into homogeneous fishcakes with acceptable mercury levels. In reality, it appears that there is no attempt at homogeneous blending of any description. Fish are considered to be blended simply by virtue of the sheer quantities of fish which are processed at the Winnipeg FFMC facility and the resultant averaging of their mercury contents.

Leaving Birch Lake, the tourist proceeded to United States Customs where he failed to declare his intended importation of the fish. When a search revealed them, the entire episode backfired and the disturbance thus created brought five trips by conservation and fish management officers to Oscar's dock. Because the tourist contested his apprehension, an entire raft of questions and malpractices had been exposed — including an additional fish slip with a forged signature of Oscar Peterson.

Oscar, when accosted by this battery of officials, being unfamiliar with and wary of the intricate and fluid legal responsibilities of his trade, recoiled out of genuine fear for his livelihood. He now swears never to sell another fish elsewhere than the FFMC. Not even a whitefish. Not even to a friend. Never. 'If you ever see a fish slip with my name on it' he swore to the Ministry of Natural Resources officers, 'you can confiscate the fish, because it won't be my signature.'

Wednesday, September 28 we had rain again. Low ceiling and frequent V's of geese moving south.

Finally, the long-awaited plane came this afternoon, around 5 p.m. Just under the wire of darkness, considering the hour flight back to town. They sent a Beechcraft which, luckily, cleaned us out. We had over 2,000 pounds of fish in the cooler — some of it for six days — and Oscar was getting nervous about the possibility of losing a good portion of the load. To make matters worse, he'd been out of 'snoose' for two days. He chewed through Bruce's tin of pipe tobacco

The beginning of a quiet winter with the dogs: reading, listening to the radio, cutting poplar for the stove.

and has been working on my last pouch. He admits to not being able to sleep and has been visibly edgy for days. When the plane didn't bring our food order, which included a couple of fresh rolls of snuff, he ordered a Cessna 180 for tomorrow to bring it in. Although we're low on a couple of items, we are far from starving; Oscar essentially called for a plane — to the tune of about $140.00 — to bring in his snuff. Did a tally today and we're 7,000 pounds short on whitefish.

It's the time of year when everyone begins to look for signs: signs of moose, signs of snow, signs of beaver feed-piles, signs of fish spawning and, ultimately, signs of freeze-up. Those who are not year-round residents on the lake wait for the break between fall and winter when they can fly to the safety of Red Lake and south. Oscar's only full-time neighbors are Karl and Polly Koezur, prospector and archaeologist, who live four miles down the lake, and Bruce Smith, trapper on Otto Young's line.

Freeze-up, to Oscar, spells the decisive end to fishing. And the beginning of another quiet winter with the dogs — reading, listening to the radio, cutting poplar to feed his stove. By not putting up wood in advance of winter, he forces himself to get outdoors and keep active. There might be a couple of brief trips to town and perhaps a few visitors to share a bottle, some tales of wolf activity, and an endless game of cribbage. I asked Oscar what he thought he'd do if he ever had to quit fishing. 'Nothing'. Would he move to town? 'Oh no! I'd stay right here. Live in the bush. I could never live in the city. It's no place for a man to live.' Has he ever considered finding a partner, getting married? 'Nope, Life's too short.' Was that a smile?◆

The Indian Portraits of Edmund Morris

By Jean McGill

Author McGill, who has written the history of Lanark County and two books for children, has been researching the life and art of Edmund Morris for several years.

Her article is based in part on information from the western diary of Edmund Morris; quotations from the diary are used with permission of the Ethnology Department of the Royal Ontario Museum.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND why Edmund Morris's portraits of Canadian Indians have been largely ignored by art historians since his untimely death in 1913. Morris's work was in many ways superior to that of Paul Kane. Morris himself considered Kane to be an adventurer-explorer whose paintings were for the most part a romantic record of the race, but admitted that Kane's work was better in craftsmanship than that of Catlin, 'the other Indian painter'.

Morris, in contrast, portrayed personal qualities of individual Indians as well as their tribal distinctions. A reserve missionary once remarked that it was easy to determine whether a Morris portrait was of a Blackfoot, a Peigan, or a Blood; his subjects, too, recognized themselves easily. Today his portraits remain a valuable record of Indian chiefs and headmen as they were before their way of life was changed.

Wealthy and independent, Edmund Morris attended art schools in New York and Paris and spent the summers painting in Holland. His landscapes reflected the Dutch influence, but his interests extended beyond pastoral scenes to the Indian people, for whom he had understanding and deep sympathy, inherited from his father and his grandfather.

His grandfather William, a soldier in the War of 1812, settled with other disbanded soldiers along the Rideau River in eastern Upper Canada in 1816. He opened a general store at Perth, the first settlement in

Edmund Morris painting Ojibway Chief Cheese Quinini at Chapleau, Ontario, 1906.

Public Archives of Canada

that wilderness area, and employed Indians from the Ottawa Valley from time to time. They regarded him as a friend and called him *Shakushreik* — the Rising Sun.

In 1872 Edmund's father, Alexander Morris, was appointed lieutenant-governor of Manitoba, the North-West Territories, and Keewatin. Edmund was a year old when the family moved to Fort Garry to live at Government House. He recalled in later years the Indian chiefs who visited their home during the five years that his father officiated in the province.

Between 1872 and 1876 Lieutenant-Governor Morris participated in negotiating and signing Treaties Nos 3 and 4 (the North-West Angle Treaty and the Qu'Appelle Treaty); revisions to Treaties Nos 1 and 2; Treaty No 5 (The Winnipeg Treaty), and Treaty No 6 (Treaty of Forts Carlton and Pitt). Later he wrote a book entitled *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories* describing in detail the meetings, negotiations, wording and signings of these and other treaties.

Alexander Morris, a lawyer by profession, attempted to ensure justice and satisfaction for the Indian tribes by the careful wording of the treaties to prevent malpractice at a later date. Although the documents appeared to be binding 'forever', another century proved differently and today the lands originally set out as a permanent residence for the tribes have vastly altered in size and shape.

Edmund Morris began his career as a landscape painter in the area of Beaupré, Quebec. His first portrait commission came from the Ontario government in 1906 and related to the final signing of Treaty No 9 with the James Bay Indians. He may have obtained this assignment through a member of the treaty party, Daniel G. MacMartin, a friend of the family, from Perth.

In July Morris left Toronto by train and met the treaty party at Biscotasing north-west of Sudbury. The party consisted of Dr Duncan Campbell Scott and Samuel Stewart, representing the federal government; Mr D. G. MacMartin, representing the Ontario government; Pelham Edgar, clerk; Dr Alex G. Meindl; Constable J. L. Vanesse; two voyageurs and a cook. Scott, Stewart and MacMartin were the commissioners. Some of the Ojibway and Cree bands in the James Bay Territory had signed the Treaty in 1905; the remaining bands were to be visited and their signatures obtained in 1906.

The journey was a new experience for Morris. He travelled by canoe through the rugged terrain of northern Ontario and wrote later of the native people: 'there is a joyousness in the life of the forest which is splendid . . . I was the first artist to go among them and they were superstitious but finally agreed to sit for their portraits and they thought it was great magic.' He described them as 'a stalwart race carrying their heads high, of a rich colour like old copper and black straight hair but cut short. Their eyes are of a deep brown.'

Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto

'The Widow Betsy'. This woman who lived alone on Lake Missinaibi was one of Morris's few portraits of Indian women. Sketched in 1906.

It was his first experience living among Indians and his admiration for them was coupled with his sympathy for the conditions of their lives where such diseases as 'consumption' yearly carried off members of the tribe. Later he complained 'if our people realized the conditions of these wards of the Crown, more would be done to further the work carried on amongst them by two excellent clergymen [Reverend C. Banting and Reverend C. D. Ovens], the Anglican Bishop of Moosonee [Right Reverend George Holmes] and the Catholic priest, Father Dugas, who work strenuously.'

At the Hudson's Bay post of Brunswick House on Lake Missinaibi, Morris sketched his first portraits of Indians and voyageurs from Moose Factory. One of his few portraits of Indian women was done here — that of the Widow Betsy who lived alone in a tent on the opposite shore of the lake from her band.

Morris participated as a witness to treaty signatures at New Brunswick House in July 1906. He travelled with the treaty party as they proceeded and after they

had completed their work he stayed to paint, returning to Toronto on the 18th of September.

His next commission, also from the Ontario government, was to find the remaining chiefs and headmen of the tribes who had signed the earlier treaties with the federal government. In this he enlisted the help of his cousin, Murney Morris of Winnipeg. He learned that one of the best authorities on Plains Indians was a friend of his father, Colonel A. G. Irvine, retired from the North West Mounted Police and warden at Stony Mountain Penitentiary. Edmund wrote to Irvine in 1906 and received an invitation to visit him as soon as he came west. He arrived in Winnipeg in June 1907, spent a night with his cousin, and then left for Stony Mountain to see Irvine. They sat up into the early morning hours talking about the West as it had been in Alexander Morris's time and during the Northwest Rebellion when Irvine had been a commander of a force at Fort Carlton. 'The old man' Morris wrote in his diary, 'was full of tales.' Irvine had been Assistant Commissioner of the North West Mounted Police and was present at the signing of Treaties Nos 6 and 7. He gave Edmund much information about the Indians who participated, and about events leading up to the treaties.

When he returned to Winnipeg, Morris took the train to Calgary where he met Colonel Sam Steele. Colonel Steele knew the Blackfoot well and directed Morris to the reserve at Gleichen where J. T. Gooderham, the Indian agent, gave him an upstairs room as a studio. At Gleichen he also met Father J. L. Laverne of the Roman Catholic mission, who offered to go with him as interpreter and explain his presence and purpose to the Indians. Laverne and Morris were to become staunch friends. As they proceeded from camp to camp Edmund soon learned that his father was remembered by the elder Indians with respect and goodwill.

He chose for his first portrait, *Sisoyoke* — The Cutter Woman — who had been Crowfoot's favourite wife. When Edmund arrived at her lodge and when his presence was explained she wondered why he wanted to paint her, for she was 'nothing but bones'. She showed Morris a chain of medals that had been presented to Crowfoot by some of the premiers who had visited him, and a velvet bonnet given to her by Colonel Irvine. This, she said proudly, she used to wear to council meetings. Morris presented her with a shawl and a bright silk handkerchief for her head, and some tea and sugar. In his diary he commented that she appeared to be about 80 years old and that her face and hair were smeared with red paint made from earth. His portrait of 'The Cutter Woman' established his credentials as an artist among the Indians. Her son, Chief Weasel Calf, 'gorgeous in buckskin trimmed with weasel tails and feathers' was his next subject. He had been one of the chiefs who signed Treaty No 7.

Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto

Chief Running Rabbit.

After completing these two portraits, Morris went to the south camp of the Blackfoot to meet Head Chief Running Rabbit. Here he heard the first of many complaints about the federal government. The Indians asked him to carry the message to the 'Great Chief' in Ottawa that they did not want any of their reserve sold.

At the south camp near the famous Blackfoot Crossing, Morris visited the Indian cemetery where Chief Crowfoot was buried. Crowfoot, a visionary who had seen the inevitability of white supremacy across the prairies and the coming of white settlers, sought a peaceful, if compromising settlement and had signed Treaty No 7 as head chief of the south camp on the Blackfoot Reserve. Morris painted Crowfoot's portrait from a photograph but some of the other signees of that treaty he painted from life: Old Sun, head chief of the North Blackfoot; Bull Head, head chief of the Sarcees, Chief Weasel Calf, and Chief Running Rabbit.

Running Rabbit had been appointed a minor chief for his bravery when he was 20 years old. During the Northwest Rebellion of 1885 he used his influence to keep the peace and was later invited with other chiefs to visit Ottawa. In 1890 when Crowfoot died, he was appointed chief of the south camp on the Blackfoot Reserve; later he become senior head chief. He was 72 years of age when Morris painted him in 1907. He wore his official Indian chief's uniform and held a silver and Malacca wand given to him by Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney.

Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto

'Cutter Woman', who had been Chief Crowfoot's favourite wife. In his diary Morris commented that he thought she was about 80, and that her face and hair were smeared with red paint made from earth. 'Her face lights up when speaking and her smile is very pleasant.'

Manitoba Archives

One of several hundred photographs taken by Edmund Morris. This couple may be Chief Weasel Calf and his wife.

While at Running Rabbit's camp, Morris was taken to the camp of Chief Iron Shield, one of the most difficult subjects he was to encounter. Morris had been warned he would never persuade Iron Shield to sit for him, for he hated white people. Iron Shield at the age of 56, was head chief of the south part of the Blackfoot Reserve. He was reputed to be very proud and considered himself chief of the entire reserve.

Running Rabbit eventually persuaded Iron Shield to sit for his portrait. All of one morning he sat like a statue, never moving and refusing to stop for a rest. Suddenly in the afternoon he jumped up with a yell, tore off his buckskin clothes and walked away. Morris sent his interpreter, Sevres, after him and presently Iron Shield came back, shook hands and promised to return.

The following day Morris noted in his diary: 'Painting the chief all day. He sat opposite a large mirror in which he admired himself. He gave me some hard work.'

Morris had come west with a variety of gifts to present to his Indian models. This ritual of gift-giving and the fact that he was a son of Alexander, still remembered with respect by the older chiefs and headmen, helped him to gain the co-operation of the Indians. Without exception, however, the Indians who were willing to sit were also impatient to have the portraits completed at one sitting. In later years, his portraits were criticized for being stiff, but considering the circumstances under which they were painted, this defect was understandable.

From Iron Shield's camp, Edmund proceeded to the north camp to meet Old Calf Child who had been a medicine man and a war chief. Before he sat for Morris he turned his back and prayed to his deity. Morris said of him 'He and his family are deeply interested in the world. Once a great warrior, now almost blind, his voice still rings like thunder in the camp when he invites his friends to his lodge.'

As Morris travelled from camp to camp, his understanding of the Indians grew. He learned much about their lives through conversations with missionaries such as Father L. Doucet at the Peigan Reserve. Doucet was a dedicated Roman Catholic priest who had lived among the Indians and shared their hardships for 16 years. A friendship developed between the two men and later when Morris returned to Toronto, Doucet wrote regularly, relaying messages to him from Peigan friends.

During this time Morris took numerous photographs of the Indians, their tipis and their ceremonial dances. Later through Doucet or Laverne, he sent copies of photographs to the chiefs and secured their assistance in collecting artifacts and relics as part of the ethnological collection he eventually amassed. In gratitude for their assistance, he gave the Indians gifts of flags, rings, clothing and money. He also began collecting the family histories of his subjects with the help of Indian agents and missionaries on the reserves. Later he persuaded some of the chiefs to paint their personal achievements on buffalo robes which he supplied.

Father Laverne at the Blackfoot Reserve wrote regularly to Morris passing along messages from the Blackfoot Indians whom Morris had come to know. Here, in part, is a letter to Morris from Chief Bull Plume:

My dear friend, Bear Robe

I shake your hand. I am glad to hear that you are well. I am well but my wife is not quite well. I come from the mountains, a nice country. I killed many fishes. I have no rations on the reserve. Chief Butcher has none either. I have lots of horses. I will have to sell some to get something to eat. I have a good field of potatoes. It will help me . . . I thank you for the flag you sent me. I like it. And for the medal also. My wife got the ring you gave me. She likes it. I have a medicine whistle and another rare thing for you. I like if you send me a cane.

(sgn) Bull Plume

Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto

Head Chief Iron Shield. He, like all of Morris's Indian subjects, expected his portrait to be done in one sitting.

During 1907 Morris painted on the Blackfoot, Sarcee, Peigan and Blood reserves and in the summer and fall of 1908 he added Cree, Saulteaux, Assiniboine and Stoney portraits to his collection. He also began putting together a booklet for an exhibition of 55 of his Indian portraits, to be held by the Canadian Art Club in their Toronto club rooms in the winter of 1909. The booklet included historical background on each tribe and brief descriptions of the individual Indians whose portraits were being shown. Morris also set up a display of Indian relics and artifacts from his collection.

A critic writing for an American art magazine commented on the show and chose the portraits of Iron Shield and Bull Plume as the two most outstanding. 'When the reviewer first saw the total exhibition' the article stated 'he thought he [Morris] had exaggerated the colour but when he had a chance to compare the original garments, some of which Morris had hung between the groups of portraits, he recognized that actually Morris had subdued the tones of the original colours.' The costumes had been gifts to Lieutenant-Governor Alexander Morris from the Indians themselves.

The exhibition was well received and encouraged the Ontario government to commission further portraits. By July 1909 Morris had completed 60 portraits representing all of the tribes of Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. He then urged the government of Saskatchewan to commission a series of 25. 'Some of the best types [of Indians]' he wrote to the premier of Saskatchewan, 'are liable to shuffle off to the Happy Hunting Grounds where they will again be happy and have lots of horses and buffalo.' After due consideration by Cabinet the government of Saskatchewan ordered 15 portraits for the new legislative buildings to open in Regina in 1912.

In January 1909 Chief Running Rabbit sent a letter to Morris in Toronto to say that he and his children were hungry and had no rations but only their work in the coal mine to live on. Iron Shield also wrote in January telling him how badly the government was treating his people. 'We have nothing to eat' he wrote. 'We are starving and now the government men are trying to buy our reserve.' Iron Shield vowed the reserve had been given to his band by the Queen, complete with hay 'and the coal mine found upon it which was to be for the Indians and their children. I do not want to sell it. Tell the Chiefs down there to treat us better.'

In June of the same year Father Doucet reported in a letter to Morris that the Department of Indian Affairs was trying to get the Peigans to sell part of their reserve and some of them had already consented although others 'would not part with their land at any cost'. He urged Morris to come to the mission saying he could have an upper room as a studio, stay as long as he liked, and board with the mission staff. By the fall of 1909 the government had succeeded in buying part of the Peigan Reserve. Morris heard too from Chief Miscopeting and a group of his Saulteaux kinsmen that already their treaty had been broken. This was deeply disturbing to Morris.

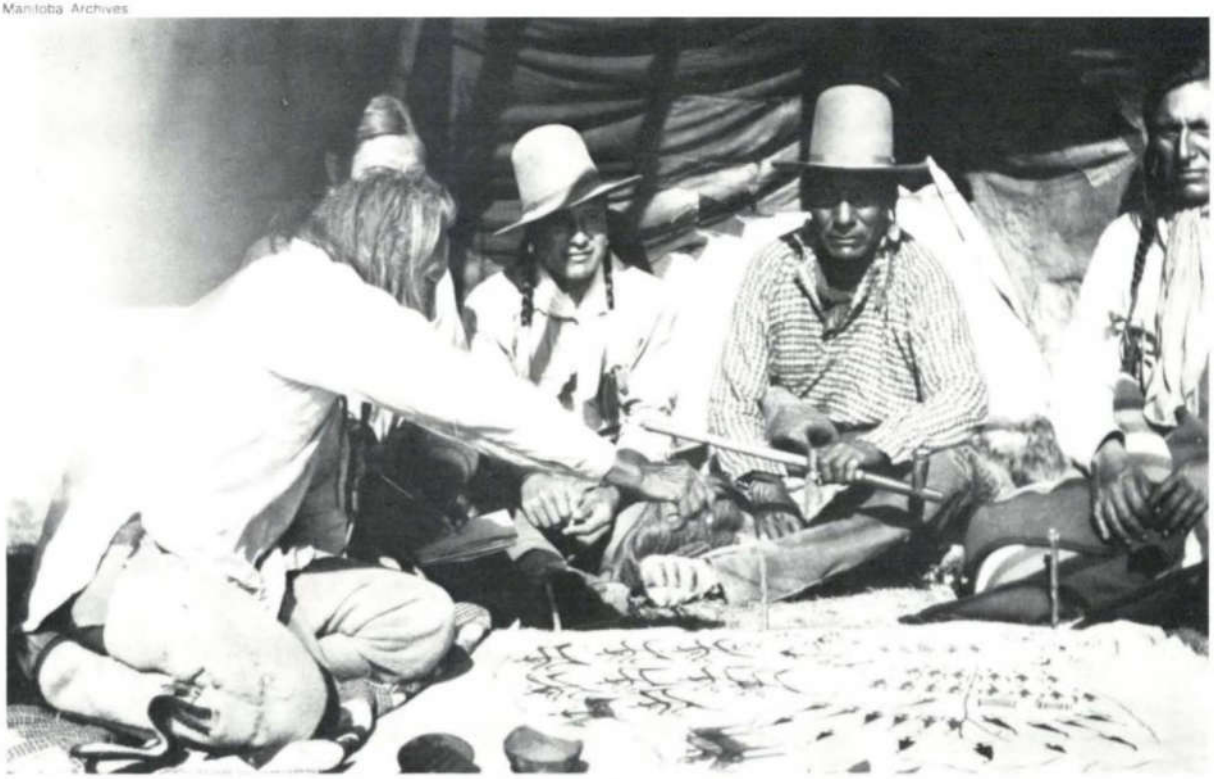
Government of Saskatchewan collection

Chief Pimotat, an Algonquin Cree, whose portrait was done for the Saskatchewan government.

In 1910 Morris completed a series of five Blackfoot portraits for the Alberta government. That fall he received word that Running Rabbit was sick, partly due to the disappearance of reserve land and the willingness of his band to sell further portions of the reserve. Morris visited him and recorded in his diary that Running Rabbit would soon join his fathers. He was also informed from another source that 'Old Slow Coming Over the Hill' had 'passed in his checks' that summer.

In 1910, saddened by the passing of the Indians he had come to know and the plight of those who remained, Morris wrote a lengthy letter to a western newspaper in rebuttal to an article which had appeared condemning the religious rituals still practised by the Indians. Morris told how he had camped among the Blackfoot for the past four summers and knew something about them. He pointed out that when the Indians had surrendered their lands to the white men they were sun worshippers, and that not one of the treaties had forbidden freedom of religion. Although Morris had been on the friendliest terms with the priests and missionaries he pointed out that it had been

Manitoba Archives



Morris encouraged the chiefs to paint the stories of their achievements on buffalo robes that he supplied. The chief, left, may be Running Rabbit.

a mistake to have missions of different religious denominations on the reserves, for this confused the Indians.

'They are called savages' he wrote, 'yet they are more sincere in their beliefs than many of the whites who are good for one day of the week and play the devil the other six.

'I have often been awakened by hearing an old Indian offering prayers to the sun as it rose above the horizon and it is not singular that these sons of Nature should worship the sun. They are realists with a deep-rooted traditional religion.

'They were a robust, martial race and what are we reducing them to by thrusting upon them our so-called civilization? They have the stamp and bearing of warriors.'

In another effort to establish respect and recognition for the Plains Indians, Morris conceived the idea of having memorials erected to commemorate the signing of the treaties. He led off by organizing a committee to raise money through the Saskatchewan Branch of the Western Art Association, for a memorial to Treaty No. 4 signed at Fort Qu'Appelle. Walter Allward, a well-known Toronto sculptor and friend of Morris, was invited to design the memorial and John Pearson was to be the architect. Morris learned of a sacred carved stone used by the Cree Indians for rituals and arranged to purchase it in memory of his father.

In his design the sacred stone was to be flanked by two stone pillars representing the two races and at the top, the pillars were to be joined by a slab of granite symbolizing brotherhood. Money was raised and plans went ahead but before the memorial could be dedicated, Edmund Morris died accidentally of drowning in August 1913 while on a sketching holiday along the St Lawrence River. His Fort Qu'Appelle Treaty Memorial, situated on the site of the old fort and visible for miles up and down the Qu'Appelle Valley, was unveiled in October 1913.

The Reverend H. A. Lewis opened the ceremony and spoke of the history of the sacred stone. Two years after this ceremony, in November 1915, another Fort Qu'Appelle Treaty Memorial was unveiled, a monument completely different from Morris's original design and no longer containing the 'sacred stone'.

The names of all those who signed the Treaty — the Queen's Commissioners and the Indians alike — were there but the memorial lacked the concept of 'brotherhood' which Edmund Morris had originally envisaged.

The 60 portraits that Morris painted for the Ontario government now form part of the Royal Ontario Museum's ethnology collection. A few at a time are shown on the lower floor of the Museum. Those painted for the Alberta and Saskatchewan governments hang in their respective legislative buildings. There are also Indian portraits painted by Edmund Morris in private collections. ◆

C. Preston

Churchill: a view of the rocky shore and Hudson Bay.

To School in London

By Anne Ellen Inkster

In 1925 Mrs R. F. Inkster (nee Spencer) wrote this account of being sent from Fort Churchill along with her sister Edith, to a school in London where they stayed from 1885 to 1893.

It is published in 'The Beaver' by permission of her daughters Miss Mary Inkster and Mrs D. C. Wiley of Winnipeg.

IN THE LATE SUMMER of 1885 the Hudson's Bay Company people at Churchill were anxiously awaiting the arrival of the ship from England, already six weeks overdue. Every day my father, who was officer in charge, climbed the rocks and with his field-glasses scanned the vast waters of Hudson Bay looking for the small speck on the horizon. Anxiously, I say, for its non-arrival meant great hardships for the few souls living at Churchill who depended on the ship for their yearly supplies. The arrival of the ship was the event of the year, bringing provisions and clothing, news, parcels and papers from relatives and friends in the old land. Long, long ago as it is, I can still remember the excitement in the community when word came that the ship was sighted. The first person to see it was rewarded, as far as I can remember, with some flour, tea and sugar.

Some years later when my brother Bertie [Robert John] was visiting Churchill after nine years at St John's College in Winnipeg, he announced casually at lunch 'Oh by the way, I believe I saw the ship when I was on the rocks this morning.' As quick as a flash every person at the table was hurrying to the rocks to see for himself if this could possibly be the case. I was not there, but I believe my brother was not very popular for a while. It was inconceivable that anyone could sight the ship and not become delirious with joy.

Well, to go back, this summer of 1885 meant more to us all than just the annual coming of the ship, for on her return trip my sister Edith and I, aged 10 and 8, were to be passengers. We were to attend school in England and for the past year my mother and Mrs Lindsay, our housekeeper, had been busily preparing our clothes. Our dresses, hats, coats and shoes had been bought in the United States two years before when my mother visited her sister, Mrs Holland, in Philadelphia after placing my brother in school in Winnipeg. Our home-made trunks, painted green, were all packed and ready, the neatly folded garments making a downy bed for our treasured dolls and work baskets, gifts from explorers who had partaken of our hospitality.

Two small savages we were, full of life and fond of play. In summer our favourite pastime was sliding down the smooth rock behind our house, or chasing butterflies as they flitted amongst the sweet-smelling purple flowers growing among the willows. I can still catch that sweet perfume as I write and long to visit that isolated spot once again. In retrospect the beautiful memories of childhood are, I suppose, somewhat exaggerated. Be that as it may, the memory of that wild lonely place haunts me still. I recall, that when walking on the rocks as a small child, nothing would induce me to stray from our nurse's side. I felt that there were myriads of unseen people around and that I might be spirited away at any moment. Today as I write this, forty years later, things are different. The

Mary Inkster

The author, Anne Ellen Spencer, 20, with her sisters Effie (left) and Emmie (right).

port and townsite at Churchill have changed all this. But in the year 1885 there were only a few Company houses and the small iron church where my father held the weekly services, the usual store, offices and other buildings usually found at a Hudson's Bay post. Regularly every Sunday we were lined up and each given a few sweets, as we called them, to put in our pockets as a bribe to keep us quiet while father took the service and mother presided at the small harmonium.

I recall the high old-fashioned bookcase, with the cupboards at the bottom where the tall glass jars of sweets were kept, each containing a different brand: peppermints, sugar-coated almonds, acid drops, a small candy with a clove in the centre and, of course, barley sugar. How often have I wished for that dear old cupboard with the claw feet. It was originally the case of a beautiful piano sent from England, which could not stand the rigours of our northern climate. And Father in despair of preserving it in its original state, turned it into an attractive piece of furniture.

At this time, our family besides our parents, consisted of my brother who was attending St John's College in Winnipeg, we two older girls who were just leaving to go to school in England, and three younger sisters, aged 6, 4, and 2. There were no white people in the fort besides ourselves, the Company clerks and our housekeeper. The other residents were all Scottish half-breeds, illiterate and simple. My parents taught them cleanliness and to read and write, and Mother held a Bible class on Sunday afternoons, with the result that we were able to get girls to work who were quite efficient and capable.

I cannot recall the exact date when the ship eventually did come, but it must have been in the first week of September. I do know that on September 7th we all went aboard for dinner, and I, at least, did not

The Hudson's Bay Company post at Fort Churchill c. 1900.

realize that the time of parting had actually come. I was only 8 years old and hadn't a serious thought in my head. Towards evening, when the ship began to move out of the harbour, I found that my mother and sisters were not on board. My tears flowed freely, and I was very unhappy and 'showed some fight' — I have since been told. However, I was duly pacified when I found that Father was still with us. In a few days we reached York Factory and all stayed with Chief Trader Murdock Matheson and his wife. Still I could not realize that we were to be parted from Father, and when the time came for him to return to Churchill and for us to continue our journey, the sorrow was intense. It was hard for Father to see us go on such a long and somewhat hazardous journey with no woman on board, and both so young and inexperienced. Captain John Hawes, an old friend who had been coming out for several years, was to be in charge of us. So after a strenuous battle (it took two people to hold me down I've been told) Father boarded his boat and, as he turned the bend, waved farewell to us. We then went on board the *Cam Owen* heading for the straits.

Once on board our interest was aroused by our surroundings. We had a double cabin and lavatory allotted to us, but as we were somewhat nervous, we decided to sleep together. We were late getting away, the weather was stormy, and the sea was rough. By the time we reached the straits, the ship was blocked by ice, and unable to move. I remember the sailors playing football on the ice, and building huge fires. There were lots of polar bears about and their mournful howls would awaken us from our sleep. After we had been stuck fast for some days, the captain gave orders to conserve our provisions and to shoot some bears for immediate use. Two were killed that day and bear steaks served for dinner. My sister and I refused to taste the meat and the captain catered to us in allowing us to have ordinary provisions. After some days we were able to proceed on our way, but not for long, as we were caught again and stuck longer than ever. In fact, reports were freely circulated that we would have to spend the winter there. I cannot give the exact length of time we were fast in the ice, but I believe it was a fortnight or more altogether.

The time came when the ice moved and our ship entered the Atlantic to encounter some of the worst storms in the memory of the old-timers. Our little sailing vessel was tossed about on mountainous seas; everything was strapped down below decks and of course we were not allowed on deck. The ship could not go straight ahead, but had to 'tack' continually, so we made little headway. We were very sick too, and the days when we felt well enough to amuse ourselves with our dolls were few and far between.

At other times some of the men on board, amused with our ignorance of the civilized world, would tell us tales of England — stories that were pure invention on their part — although we did not know it at the time. Our readiness to believe everything that they told us must have amused them. There were tales of the terrible policemen, waiting at every corner to put youngsters in jail, especially if they had curls and such

pretty dolls. Needless to say we were not long in applying the scissors to our curls, and tossing our dolls overboard, and when we sighted the coast of England on 26th November, we were most apprehensive of what was awaiting us in this strange land.

Going round the south coast of England, the first wonder was the North Foreland Lighthouse, and as we were being slowly piloted up the Thames, the lights in the rigging of the huge ships we passed and the twinkling lights on shore kept us spellbound at the rail until we were forced to go below to bed. On waking next day we realized we had reached our destination, and quickly dressing ourselves, we rushed on deck to see the wonders of the East India docks — a mass of masts and ropes as far as the eye could see. There to our horror we were told that a policeman was coming to see two little girls. With screams of terror we fled to our cabin and locked ourselves in. Our steward soothed us by knocking at the door and telling us the policeman would never do us harm. Gingerly creeping out of our hiding places, we soon forgot our troubles.

The captain had gone ashore, so we paid the cook a visit in the galley. He was having a cup of tea with his wife, who had just come aboard bringing with her a bag of French pastries. She was a kindly soul, for she made her husband give each of us a cup of tea and she gave us our choice of the good things in the bag. My heart was won immediately, for a country that could produce such delectable tarts could not be a bad place. It was while we were thus employed that the first officer appeared with a gentleman, very good to look upon and wearing a tall silk hat. 'These are the little girls' said the mate, and we were told to put on our hats. I wish I had a picture of us as we appeared dressed to go ashore and to school! Although we knew nothing about fashion at the time, our clothes were absolutely years behind in style and our hats were ridiculous. Realizing now how we must have looked, I feel a great admiration for the principal of the school and her gentleman attendant. They greeted us with quiet composure. Perhaps they exchanged glances; I was too dumbfounded to notice.

Mrs Earle, the principal, took Edith's hand and her son took mine, and in a kind of daze we were put into a first-class carriage of what we afterwards learnt was a train. Many questions were asked but I could only breathe out a monosyllable or two at long intervals. Once seated in the compartment I looked around and wondered why the only other occupant, a lady, did not converse with our companion. At Churchill we knew everybody. Every time another train passed us my sister gave a series of wild shrieks and hid her face in her hands, while I sat staring stonily at the apparition, paralyzed with fear. It never entered the heads of our companions that these were the first trains we had ever seen, or that a little explanation might have kept us from making an exhibition of ourselves.

The Thames River with St Paul's Cathedral in the background. From a painting dated 1903 by W. L. Wyllie, R.A.

We alighted from the train in the heart of London where the beautiful shops were all brilliantly lit up, and more thoughts entered my small head. Why, oh why, were people walking unrestrainedly through these shops? At Churchill my father kept the store locked up, except when trading with the Eskimos and Indians. We were guided over to the road and made to enter what I thought was a black hole, but which I soon learnt was a horse-drawn cab. We had never seen a horse before but we were not so frightened of this mode of transportation. It was practically noiseless and we knew about horses from our picture books at home.

We were not long in the cab when it stopped at the school, a big white brick house, all lit up. We went inside and were shown upstairs to take off our hats and coats and have a wash before going down to the evening meal. This was already nearly over when we entered. We sat down at the end of a long table where a number of girls of all ages and a few small boys were finishing their meal. All eyes were upon us, and one of the small boys opposite me giggled. This action had no effect on me, for I was still in a state of semi-paralysis. We had an egg each but we were really too excited to

The HBC factor's house at Fort Churchill where the Spencer children were born. When this photograph was taken in 1930, the house was vacant.

eat anything. The tea, I couldn't drink. I was sick of it, for at sea we had nothing else. It was many years before I could enjoy tea again.

During the first days at school our appetites were fussy and we would not touch milk puddings, soups or greens. I became very thin and had to be put in the care of a doctor almost immediately. The medicine given to me was not much to my liking and I am afraid I gave a great deal of trouble to my teachers, for it took three of them to administer a dose. I was homesick and cried every day to go home. The principal was sympathetic and kind to us and we soon learned to love her dearly.

The Sunday following our arrival we were taken to the school church, but our clothes and appearance attracted mobs of small boys on the streets, so Mrs Earle announced that we should stay inside until we could be outfitted in new clothes.

On our first day in the schoolroom the teachers found that our education did not amount to very much, so we were started near the bottom of the school. At recess the girls tried to make friends with us. One offered me a beautiful rosy apple and I remember asking her what I should do with it. I took a bite and said I didn't like it, so she brought me an orange which I liked very much.

We were given sixpence a week for pocket money — the first money we had ever seen. Every Saturday we were allowed to buy sweets. My first purchase was sixpence worth of licorice shoe-strings. My teacher remonstrated with me for buying so much. I replied that sixpence was the only money I had. The next time I was handed my money I promptly changed it into farthings and pennies, which I distributed among my school friends, saying that I felt it sinful to be so wealthy.

By this time we were provided with an entire new outfit of clothes and were beginning to make friends and to lose our 'Hudson Bay' accents. We had our photographs taken and sent home by the next boat. Our holidays were spent either at one of the delightful English watering places or roaming through old cathedrals, abbeys, and castles. We were always accompanied by teachers, and I am afraid we rather rebelled when we were called upon to try to translate some ancient inscription on an old tomb or tablet, and keep notes of our travels.

After we had been in England a couple of years our sister Mabel was to join us. At this time Father was in charge of York Factory and that year just before the ship sailed, Mabel, our baby brother and a nursemaid were taking a walk outside the palings when they were set upon by Eskimo dogs. They ran to the gate where Mabel tried to keep the dogs off, while the maid escaped with the baby. The dogs pounced on her, tearing her ear and lacerating her legs. The howling of the dogs attracted some men working near by and they fortunately arrived in time to save her from further injury. Fortunately, too, there was a doctor stationed at York Factory who sucked the poison from her wounds and saved her life. The shock of the attack and her injuries prevented her sailing that year. When another year had passed she attempted the trip once more but was foiled again. The ship was unable to get through the straits and had to winter in James Bay,

On the girls' return voyage in 1893 the 'Erik' was trapped in the ice for several days, as she is here with 'Lady Head' four years later.

from which point Mabel was sent back to York. The next year a new ship and crew were sent out; my father looked the situation over and decided that she couldn't sail with that crew. Finally Mabel and another sister were sent overland to attend school in Winnipeg. We, in England, went down to the ship each time to meet our sister and were more than disappointed each time to find she was not on board.

By this time (1893) we were in our 18th and 16th years and I, at any rate, had almost forgotten what my parents and our home in Churchill looked like. We were to sail for home on the *S. S. Erik* leaving on 8th June. We were torn between the desire to see our parents and the sorrow of leaving our many friends. We were taken to London and handed over to a lady who was to accompany us as chaperon. The *Erik* was a great improvement over the *Cam Owen* and her captain, Alex Gray, was a fine type of man.

There were two young gentlemen going out to join the Hudson's Bay Company as apprentices, and an exceedingly nice and handsome young officer to whom we immediately lost our hearts. He played the banjo and had a nice singing voice. We held concerts and amused ourselves playing games and sketching so that we all thoroughly enjoyed the voyage.

We sailed up the coast to Aberdeen where we stopped for our mail and where we received several parcels from our friends containing books and cakes. We passed John O'Groats House and then sailed across the Atlantic to call at several posts on the Labrador Coast. Our first port of call was Cartwright. How pretty it was steaming up Hamilton Inlet, and how we enjoyed our trip ashore and dinner with the Hudson's Bay Company officer and his wife stationed there! It was hot and the mosquitoes were bad. At another port, imagine our astonishment when the Hudson's Bay officer in charge took us to his house for dinner, and introduced us to his Eskimo wife who was very gentle and courteous. They had three children, a girl and two boys.

Still further north at Davis Inlet there was no married couple, for two young gentlemen, apparently in charge there, came aboard, bringing us gifts of candy (the first time I had heard sweets referred to by that name) and figs and nuts. We went ashore and spent some of our English money in the store and after we had returned to the ship and were about to retire, we heard strains of music outside the porthole, and voices lustily singing 'Polly Wolly Doodle all the Day'. I remember that song because it was the first time I had heard it, and it sounded strange to our Victorian-trained musical ears. I may add that we were the soul of propriety, having been taught in a rigorous school. I cannot remember whether or not we eventually decided to open the porthole and thank our serenaders. This port of call was a veritable fisherman's paradise. One afternoon, having nothing to do, we spent fishing with the assistance of a man who had been a lamplighter in his home town in England. In no time we had 49 large salmon cod, more than sufficient for our use.

At a point further north, we were trapped for several anxious days in a field of ice. The captain was worried and we had to be extra quiet. Our chaperon who was very nervous came to our cabin every few hours to tell us how serious things were. She spent the

The Anglican church at Fort Churchill, c. 1900, presumably the one built by the Reverend J. Lofthouse and formally opened on the Sunday of the girls' return.

night praying, and had gone through the prayers for those at sea several times. Being very tired, she at one point wound up her prayers with 'I remain yours sincerely, Marie H.' She felt sure that after such a lapse we were all doomed.

We eventually gave up the idea of calling at the remaining posts on the Labrador Coast, and set our course towards the straits and Churchill. The Hudson's Bay posts along the coast had afforded us great amusement. We thought the houses looked like bathing machines at Broadstairs and we were sure that Churchill would have more pretentious buildings. Oh! the disillusionment! Our houses looked dwarfed. Even our rocks had shrunk. As we entered the harbour on 20 August the captain said 'This is one of the best natural harbours in the world.' Some men walking along the shore waved to us — rather nervy, we thought — but when they boarded the ship, and we were embraced by one of them, my sister said 'This is Father'. So of course I was very willing to give him a big hug. He could not get over his surprise at having two such daughters. He said he felt we were two young ladies he had never seen before. We were eager to go ashore and meet the other members of the family. So we got into the boat, Father steering, and among the crew was one Eskimo who talked incessantly, asking, as we learnt later, whether we were two new wives for the master.

It is two miles from the harbour to the post, and in a very short time we turned the point and came in view of the jetty. A girl about 10 years of age was standing at the end looking down the river. We were told that it was our youngest sister, the only one at home. We could see several figures walking down to the river. The Anglican clergyman, the Reverend J. Lofthouse, his wife and her companion were dressed up for the occasion, and so, of course, was our mother. They wore dresses with big bustles, hats with high crowns, and gloves. Our hats were flat, in the latest style, and bustles were out of fashion, so to our eyes, they were a strange group, and gloves looked so out of place in what seemed to us like the last place on earth.

After our welcomes we made our way to the house between rows of men, women and children, all anxious to see what the master's daughters looked like. My greatest thrill then was to be able to call somebody 'Father' and 'Mother'. I had often envied the girls at school who had fathers and mothers right at hand. And to be able to go to the kitchen or pantry and help ourselves to food when we felt like it, was a novelty we enjoyed.

On the evening of our arrival our parents entertained the ship's officers at dinner. The next day, Sunday, the new church was formally opened and everyone from the ship attended the service. We felt very lost when she sailed, but being young and healthy we soon set about to amuse ourselves. We started first with refashioning our mother and sister. We changed Mother's way of doing her hair to the modern style. She still wore it in curls and her cupboard was filled with crinoline dresses and bustles. These we tried to remake, not very successfully. We had more success with dancing classes. We gathered all the young boys and girls together and taught them the waltz and polka. For music, we used the old harmonium which we found very hard to manipulate, so one of Father's clerks was called in to help. He had an accordion

Mary Vokes France

A portrait of the five Spencer girls shortly after their move to Winnipeg. From the left: Emmie (Mrs William C. McFarlane); Mabel who died at the age of 19; Edith (Mrs Charles Vokes) and Ellen (Mrs R. F. Inkster) the two girls who travelled to London to attend school; and Effie who married the Reverend G. W. Findlay.

which he played for dancing. We taught in Sunday school and played the organ for services when Mrs Lofthouse was indisposed, and together with Mr Lofthouse we got up some concerts during the winter.

We were looking forward to Father's retirement which was to take place as soon as navigation on the rivers opened. He was not in the best of health, and we were anxious to get to civilization and to a doctor, so on 26th July the following year we left Churchill. Gathered on the shore were all the inhabitants, many weeping copiously. The Eskimo who were in trading at the time declared they would do business with no other master. To comfort them Father told them of the railroad which was, even then, being talked of. He described the engines and how fast he could travel to see them again, and immediately the howling ceased, and they listened attentively, their mouths wide open. I can see them still. How they loved him, and how strict he was with them, scolding them when they did wrong. They addressed him as Pe-lu-ki which means 'run about man' — for he was very active.

We travelled from Churchill to York — 150 miles — in a York boat, camping every night. It took us seven days in rough and stormy weather. Our party consisted of my father, mother, we three girls, two servants and our crew of about one dozen men. We had two boats, one for our luggage. From York to Oxford House took one month. The rivers were low and the men had to walk along the bank tracking the boat. We walked too, Mother alone staying in the boat. We were so long on this lap of our journey that we ran out of food and there were no fish to be had, and wild fowl was very scarce. Father snared a few grouse or ptarmigan and sent a couple of men ahead to bring us food from Norway House. From Norway House we went to Warren's Landing where we took the boat — a small incommodious old tub — for Selkirk. We had a terrible storm, and spent the night sitting in the small dining saloon. On 20th September we landed in Selkirk, and from there we took the train to Winnipeg.

Waiting for us on the station platform were our two sisters and our uncle and cousins. We were all strangers to one another. We went to our uncle's house, and there we saw a strange man leaning against the table. We took no notice of him until Mother uttered a little cry. She had recognized our brother. We were all together now for the first time in ten years, and oh how happy we were going to be. Our happiness, however, was short-lived, for our beloved father was very ill and the doctors we called in could give us no hope. On 11 November 1893 he passed away, a little over a month after our reunion. ◆

Swiss Guides and the Village of Edelweiss

By Roxroy West

Swiss-born Roxroy West is a graduate in history from the University of Ottawa.

IN 1899, the first Swiss alpine guides commissioned by the Canadian Pacific Railway to lead climbing parties in the Canadian Rockies arrived in Canada. For many years the mountains had remained inaccessible to all but a few hardy enough to conquer their rugged slopes. The railway brought impetus to the region and by the late 1880s majestic hotels with elegant dining halls were built along the route. While such towns as Revelstoke, Donald and Field benefited from the boom, the mountains were left largely ignored and unexplored. Canadians, in general, lacked the expertise to tackle the rocky cliffs but there were numerous alpine clubs abroad that could be attracted to the region. The mountainous topography had enormous potential and it was in this light that the managers of the Canadian Pacific Railway designed a plan to 'import' qualified Swiss guides to lead climbing parties and to explore the frontier.

The first Swiss mountain guide to visit the Canadian Rockies was Pëter Sarbach of St Niklaus. He had come to Canada in 1897 as part of an American and British expedition to lead an assault on Mount Lefroy. The climb, which took place on 3 August, was crowned with success and was followed shortly after by an initial climb of Mount Victoria and Mount Sarbach — named in honour of the guide.

In 1899, the Canadian Pacific Railway entered into contract with two professional Swiss guides to spend the summer months in Canada. The contract provided for the guides' fare from Switzerland at the start of the climbing season in May and a return trip at the season's close on 30 September. The salaries and responsibilities of the parties involved were carefully detailed. The first two guides to come under this arrangement were Edward Feuz Sr and Christian Häsler Sr, both of Interlaken. That first year, both Feuz and Häsler were stationed at Glacier House; however, in 1900, Häsler was transferred to Mount Stephen House near Field.

Between 1899 and 1912, close to twenty guides were employed for varying lengths of time in the Canadian 'Alps'. Field, Glacier, Lake Louise and Emery Lake were the most common starting points and each station had its resident guides, packers and outfitters. The peaks proved a challenge to novice and professional climbers alike. This was a period of first ascents, and many prominent climbers, such as Lord Emery, had a mountain, peak or lake named after them. The popularity of the Swiss guides grew steadily and it was not long before the Canadian Pacific Railway managers embarked upon a more ambitious project — the village of Edelweiss.

Bringing the Swiss guides each year from Switzerland and returning them at the end of the climbing season became a costly undertaking. As early as 1909, R. A. W. Kerr, passenger manager for the railway, proposed to Colonel J. S. Dennis, the C.P.R. President, that the construction of a Swiss village might well be an aesthetic and beneficial project to consider, providing both a tourist attraction and a central location for the Swiss guides. He wrote:

> For the past three or four years I have been working on an idea for establishing a colony, or Swiss village, at some point in the mountains — say not farther west than Revelstoke, or in the Columbia Valley on the main line, if a suitable location could be obtained . . . my idea being somewhere on the slope of a hill, with a southern aspect, in close sight of the main line, to construct a sufficient number of Alpine cottages built after the plan of the little Swiss cottages in the Alps, with a sufficient amount of ground around each cottage where they could grow vegetables, flowers, and keep chickens, goats, etc., — in other words, live just as they live in Switzerland.

He was certain that winter employment could be found without too much trouble, and concluded that a suitable name for the village would be 'Edelweiss'.

The suggestion excited interest and a search for a convenient location was ordered. The site selected had to meet certain specifications. Apart from being situated on the main line of the railway, the area would also have to have a sufficiently long growing season to permit vegetable gardening and be appropriately located so as to provide employment for the guides during the long off-season. B. G. Hamilton of the Calgary office, who had been sent to inspect possible locations for the village, recommended that Golden be selected as the site for its construction. The town of Golden was suitably located, for it was within a reasonable distance from Field and Laggan (the Lake Louise station) while at the same time it afforded easy access to the Columbia Ice Field and its surrounding peaks. Furthermore, the 'property to the north of this station [Golden] has a southern slope, and any village

Glenbow Archives

Professional Swiss guides Edward Feuz and Christian Häsler, hired by the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1899 to lead climbing parties in the Canadian Rockies.

established there could be easily seen from the train, which generally passes through there in daylight.'

On 27 January 1910, Hamilton visited Golden and consulted with the town barrister, Mr A. N. Pinkman. Pinkman proposed several lots which were for sale, but drew particular attention to a quarter-section owned by a Mr Sammers. 'His land lies to the north of the right-of-way and immediately adjoins the Western mile-board, being the southwest quarter of Section 24, Township 27, Range 22, West of the Fourth Meridian.' The land could be properly irrigated and more than half of the acreage formed a gentle slope which could easily be seen from the station.

> About 60 acres of the entire area lies comparatively flat, and the other 100 acres is made up by a hill side with a southern aspect that it would be possible to cultivate. The greater portion of the flat has been under cultivation for some time and seems to have a good growing capacity. What is known as the Hospital Creek crosses the Southern end of the whole quarter, and by proper damming I think there could be sufficient water in it to supply all that is required for irrigation purposes.

The initial plan of the village consisted of half-a-dozen six-room chalets picturesquely situated at the crest of a hill. At the base of the property, the railway planned to build ready-made ten-acre farms which would then be sold to eligible buyers. Actual construction of the chalets commenced in 1911. Written accounts bring into question the quality and appearance of the chalets. One witness, for example, wrote to Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, Honorary Chairman of the Canadian Pacific Railway:

> I venture to make a few comments on the Swiss village at Golden . . . In the first place the houses differ totally from the Swiss chalet, being completely unlike in size, pitch and construction, to say nothing of its being painted red: but the feature which must, I think, jar most on lovers of Switzerland is that the houses are set in rows at even distances and *all facing the same way* which I fancy to the liberty-loving Switzer must be inendurable. . . .

Later, the guides would complain that the chalets were cold and the chimneys poorly constructed. And worse, because the houses were constructed on steep rock butts, access was difficult and tiresome for their wives and children.

The village was scheduled to be completed by the spring of 1912 but when the guides arrived, construction had not yet been completed. Twelve guides came to Canada that summer, but documentation is sketchy and conflicting on the question of how many guides actually took up residence in the village. One prerequisite, apparently, for occupying a chalet in the village was that the Swiss guide be married. Available sources confirm that four guides — Edward Feuz Jr, Ernest Feuz, Christian Häsler Jr, and Rudolph Aemmer — each occupied a chalet with their families. Edward Feuz Sr had never

C.P.R. Archives

Glacier House where Feuz and Häsler were stationed in 1899. This C.P.R. hotel was dismantled in July 1929.

CPR Archives

Edward Feuz Jr, the senior guide at Edelweiss during its brief history.

been too happy with conditions in Canada and refused to settle in Edelweiss. Instead, he chose to return to Switzerland. The youngest Feuz brother, Walter, presumably moved in with Edward Jr, but did not take up guiding until 1921. The ten-acre farms which lay at the base of the hill were originally intended for Swiss immigrants. The small size of the farms proved a serious complication and eventually, the farms were let to local residents.

The following year, one of the remaining two chalets was claimed by Christian Yorimann. Originally, this cottage was occupied by Walter Schaufelberger, a Swiss guide recently engaged by the Canadian Pacific Railway. Schaufelberger, however, met with the united opposition of the other residents because he refused to consider Edelweiss his permanent home — let alone marry. Edward Jr, the senior guide in the village, wrote to James Hart of the C.P.R.'s Calgary office:

> A few weeks ago, Mr. Reed sent up a Guide from Montreal to Glacier House. I was called up to Glacier, to speak to him. That man won't agree to get married and settle down here. He intends to stay here only for the summer and go back to Switzerland in the fall. So we are all against him. . . . His name is Schaufelberger.
>
> Kindly take up that matter . . . and discharge him.

Hart sympathized with the 'delicate harmony' the guides were trying to preserve and approved of the replacement.

To accommodate the circumstances, a different contract was prepared for the guides. According to the new agreement, each guide was committed to a five-year term during which he agreed to reside in the village. After the first year of residence, he was required to pay rent at the rate of ten dollars a month plus an additional ten dollars a month to repay the railway for livestock it had invested in for his farm. In return, the C.P.R. would cover the cost of transportation from Switzerland to the Swiss village for the guide and his family, a suitable dwelling, and one acre of farmland. Furthermore, the Company assured each immigrant employment as a guide during the tourist season and, more importantly, the 'Company undertakes to provide the Guide with employment from the First day of October to the Thirtieth day of April, at the wages then current and usual to the work at which he is employed.' Nowhere in the contract was there a guarantee that the work would be in or around the village of Edelweiss.

Problems arising out of this omission in the contract began to surface in the winter of 1912. After the climbing season had ended in late September, the guides were kept busy with caretaking duties as well as repairing irrigation ditches and a fire wall around the Swiss village. When winter approached, they were offered snow-shovelling jobs at Banff and Glacier. The prospect of being sent away from home during the winter did not meet with a joyous reception. Edward Jr, spokesman for the Swiss village, echoed the general feeling when he wrote to Hart: 'The Guides won't agree to go away for the winter . . . they are away all summer . . . We have not brought out the families, to leave them alone all the year round; in this case we could have left them in Switzerland.' Hart could offer little consolation. Work in nearby Golden, he claimed, was not available and unless the guides agreed to go elsewhere, they would be without steady employment. This response and the grim future they faced could only engender bitterness. Edward Feuz Jr recalls,

> In winter, after 1912, we were here with our wives. We had a contract for winter and summer work, but there was no winter work in Golden. There was no money or cheques in winter. I took a contract with a nearby sawmill. Spring came and we went back to the C.P.R. Next winter there was no work again. I was a teacher in an open-air rink at Golden where I made good money. We were angry.

The guides at one point suggested that they be employed during the winter months in the manufacture of pre-fabricated shelters, which could be easily carried and assembled along the various mountain trails in the spring. Hart considered the idea interesting but nothing came of it.

Frustrated and faced with pressing financial problems, Feuz wrote to the Calgary office:

> In Summer we are engaged for four months. Our wages are $120 per month. We have to pay Rent $120 [per year] for the Chalet. It is an impossibility to keep a family on such little money all the year round. The Living is very high here in Golden.

We signed the agreement for five years, and for all this time we are strictly in the Company's hands. The contract says, that the Company is supposed to give us work from the first of October 'till the 30th of April; but the Company does not follow this paragraph.

The C.P.R. has lots of work in the Colony [Edelweiss] but engages other men and intends then to send us away for the winter. We are already away all summer; we do not want to go for winter again.

In an effort to demonstrate their concern, the Canadian Pacific Railway agreed to cancel rent payments and all debts owed to the railway, but officials could offer little encouragement or prospect of alternative employment. Eventually, two guides were sent to Glacier and three to Lake Louise to shovel snow, and carry out winter maintenance.

To add insult to injury, the railway's department managers ran for cover. It seemed every time Feuz wrote to one department, a polite letter would return saying that responsibility for the village rested with another branch of the organization. Originally, or so it seemed, the village was placed under the care of the Canadian Pacific's department of natural resources. However by 1913, P. L. Naismith, the department's manager, informed Hayter Reed, manager of the hotel department, that such was no longer the case. 'The question' he wrote, 'is one which properly comes within the jurisdiction of either your department or the passenger department and the handling of these guides should not in any way be dealt with by our department.' Reed, on the other hand, was even less willing than Naismith to accept responsibility for the Swiss colony and added that the 'only department which could do so, I fancy, would be the operating department.' Had the failure of the Edelweiss project become an embarrassment?

Frustrated in their attempt to achieve some satisfactory action to settle their grievances, the Swiss guides quickly became disillusioned about their future in Edelweiss. The fate of the village was sealed and its gradual disintegration became inevitable. Edward Feuz Jr and Christian Yorimann were among the first to leave. Yorimann remained at Field until Mount Stephen House was closed. Other guides moved to Glacier House and other sites where they were needed. Glacier House would soon become history as the completion of the Connaught Tunnel and the subsequent re-routing of the rail line made the hotel obsolete. The six chalets were eventually sold to Walter Feuz.

The Edelweiss project was designed primarily as a tourist attraction and only by co-incidence was a village. It lacked the planning and resources necessary to make it a viable project. Perhaps, as Edward Jr reminisced, had the guides been able to live on the 10-acre farms at the bottom of the hill, they would have stayed. Unhappily, the Canadian Rockies were not exploited as in Switzerland where the guides occupied their winter hours leading Bernina ski-tours in and around the various resorts. Winter employment had to

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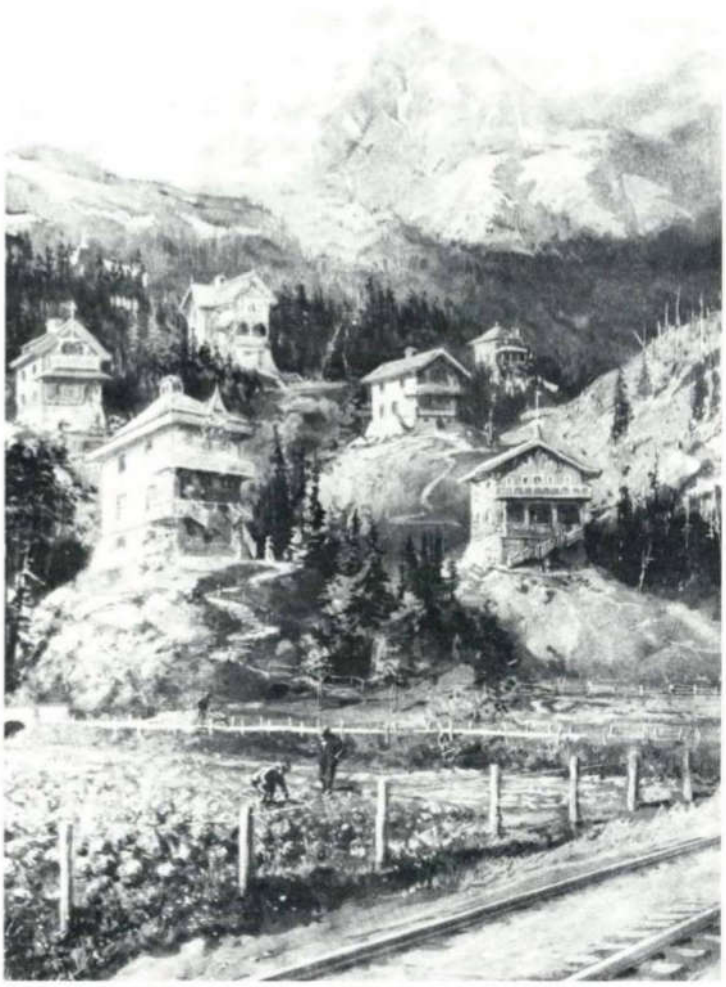


An artist's conception of the village of Edelweiss, as it appeared in the supplement to the 'Illustrated London News' 18 February 1911.

be found elsewhere and when no satisfactory employment could be secured at Edelweiss, the purpose of the village was undermined. In a 'preliminary survey' on the subject of mountain guides prepared in the 1950s for the National Parks Branch, the report acknowledged the failure of the Edelweiss experiment:

The experiment commenced by the C.P.R. in 1912 in bringing out from Switzerland twelve experienced mountain guides with their families to settle at Edelweiss near Golden can now be considered unsuccessful. The climbing season in Canada is short, and the demand for mountain guides has been insufficient to provide adequate income for the support of these guides and their families. To help meet this problem, the C.P.R. has hired these guides in winter to shovel snow off the roofs of some of their hotel installations and to perform other caretaking duties. The lack of economic security over the years is the chief reason why none of the sons of these guides have followed up this profession.

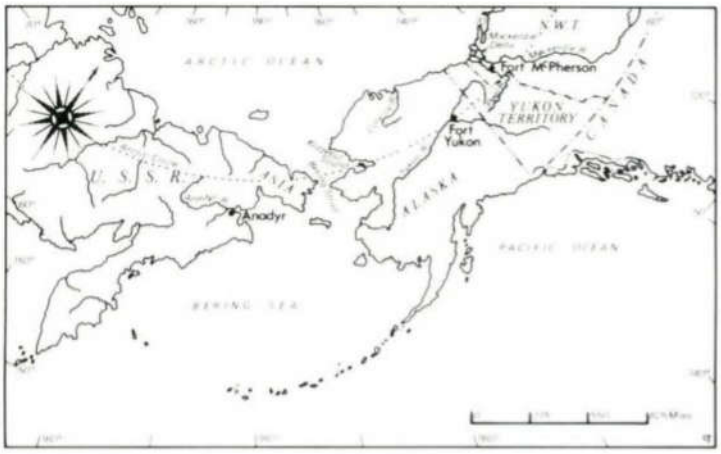
The village of Edelweiss had been little more than a romantic experiment in colonization. ◆

Kutchin Trade Prior to 1840

By Ethel Stewart

A graduate of Queen's University, Miss Stewart has researched the culture of the North-west Athabascans for 20 some years. During this time she lived for four years at Fort McPherson.

A Kutchin mother and children wearing clothing of 'dressed deer skin' decorated with Russian trade beads and 'small leathern tassels wound around with porcupine quills'.



LONG BEFORE WESTERN EUROPEANS set foot in America, there was a well established trade among the people west of Mackenzie River: between the Kutchin Indians of the Peel River area and their Eskimo neighbours on the shores of the Arctic Sea; between the Kutchin and the Na-Dene of the Pacific Coast; between the Kutchin, via Eskimo middlemen, and the people of North-east Siberia. They were, essentially, a commercial people who supplied their wants by barter with their neighbouring tribes.

The principal article of Kutchin trade with the Eskimos was the long-haired wolverine skin. Unlike that of other animals, the fur of the wolverine sheds the frost. It was and is today, much in demand by the Eskimos of the Arctic Coast for the ruffs of parka hoods to shield their faces from arctic temperatures.

In August of each year, the Peel River people prepared one of their most valuable articles of trade with the Na-Dene of the Pacific Coast. At this time of year the *inconnu* (a fish not known elsewhere I am told) and whitefish are not so firm of flesh and cannot be dried in the same manner as in June and July, when the whole fish is cleaned, slashed diagonally and dried on a rack by the sun and wind. But in August they were cooked, dried and pounded into powder. A birch-bark basket about eighteen inches long was filled with fish oil that had been strained through the skin of a baby caribou. To this was added powdered dry fish and

Kutchin dancers displaying feathers and Russian knives, which Murray said were of 'iron, but the fancy handles and fluted blades are of more value to them than the temper of the Knife; they complain of ours being too hard and the difficulty of sharpening them.' From a drawing by Alexander Murray who established Fort Yukon for the HBC in Russian territory in 1847.

cranberries. A cover was sewn on the basket and dried fish, prepared earlier in the season, were wrapped all around until a suitable bundle was made. It was then wrapped in willow bark netting which the Kutchin prepared by soaking willow bark in water in ditches in order to separate the fibre, which was then twisted into a cord for making netting for wrapping bundles and for fish nets. (The fish of Peel River were very fat as compared with the salmon of the western tribes and fish oil was also an article of trade.) Since the caribou is a lean animal and fat was craved in a northern diet, dried fish bundles, packed in the manner described, had an extra trade value with the western Kutchin as well as the Na-Dene.

One of the main articles for which the Kutchin bartered their goods with the Na-Dene was dentalium and arenecola shells. These were collected in the archipelago lying between the State of Oregon and Cape Fairweather and passed by trade from tribe to tribe northward along the coast, becoming a medium of exchange.

There is reason to believe that the Kutchin may have received goods from Asia long before the Russian conquest of Siberia. In 1711, the Chukchi of North-east Asia were able to tell the Russians of the furs, the forests, the natives — their boats and their dwellings — and of the coastal and inland population of the 'Great Land' to the east. They also informed the Russians that the journey could be made in one day in their skin boats during calm weather in summer or with swift reindeer over the ice in winter.

The Chukchi of North-east Siberia and the Eskimo of North-west America were in possession of walrus ivory and narwhal horn as early as 262 A.D. Both wore bone-plate armour carved from walrus ivory. Early in the epoch of the T'ang, 618-906 A.D., both the Arabs and the Chinese were involved in the trade, and the Tungus of the Amur and the Koreans also took part in it. It is believed that this trade reached the Mo-ho of the Amur before the eighth century and the Khitan of Manchuria before the tenth. A voyage from the Amur to Kamchatka and thence to the land of the Chukchi took six to seven weeks. Thus the goods of Asia reached North-east Asia at a very early period and through the Chukchi, came to the Eskimos and possibly the Kutchin.

Some two hundred years ago, a well-defined trading route commenced at Anadyr near the Bering Sea, crossed Bering Strait to Kotzebue Sound, and continued overland to the Colville River and from thence to the delta of the Mackenzie. Identical remains in ancient house ruins on each side of the strait bear witness to the movement of peoples back and forth several centuries before any European entered North-eastern Siberia. Indeed, the Russians often found in the hands of North American tribes with whom they had little contact, goods sold by traders in Siberia.

How many years before 1711 traffic between the natives of North America and those of the Siberian Coast went on, we do not know. But we may suppose from the knowledge they had that the goods of Asia reached the Kutchin through the Eskimo long before the Russians entered Alaska.

The first impact of western trading methods was felt by North-west America in the 1740s with the coming of the Russians. Probably no Kutchin saw the Russians until the end of the eighteenth century, but by that time their furs had reached the Russian newcomers.

Of all the goods brought to the North-west tribes by the Russians, beads and metals found most favour. At King George's Sound on the Alaska Coast, in 1778 Captain Cook saw many sky-blue beads about the size of a large pea ornamenting the clothing of the Indians. At Prince William Sound, this blue bead was in great demand.

Russian goods reached the Eastern Kutchin before the end of the eighteenth century. In 1789 Alexander Mackenzie found that the Kutchin, whom he met on the lower section of the river that bears his name, particularly prized these blue beads. In 1952, the Peel River Kutchin showed the writer some of these large blue Russian beads which they still treasured.

Fifty years after Mackenzie's voyage, in 1837, Thomas Simpson saw Kutchin people at old Fort Good Hope with knives and buttons of Russian manufacture. Before the establishment of the Peel River Post, Russian trade was well diffused throughout all Kutchin tribes west of the Mackenzie River, though many of them had never seen the Russians.

In 1848 at Fort Yukon, A. H. Murray gave a list of goods traded by the Russians for the furs of the Kutchin:

'Last summer they brought more goods than formerly, principally beads, common and fancy, white, red and several shades of blue. The common white beads were usually traded higher than with us; of the blue beads, a little larger than a garden pea, only *ten* were given for a beaver skin. Except kettles, guns and powder, every other article was traded higher than with us. Tobacco and snuff were traded very high, also the small shells, some of which you sent me from Fort Simpson. . . . These are traded in this country 6 and 8 for a beaver or 3 martens. A box of these shells here would be worth over *two thousand pounds*. . . . The Russians bring to this country capots, cloth (of the latter, almost none are traded) powder horns, knives, fire steels, files, iron hoops for arrow heads, iron pipes, common arm bands, awls, rings and small brass coins similar to our farthing with which the Indian women fringe their dresses. They bring no regular axes, only a flat piece of steel shaped something like a plane iron, which the Indians fasten to a crooked stick with batiche, and use as we would an adze. . . . They have fine and commons guns, but our guns are always preferred to theirs. Formerly they brought only sheet iron kettles, but last summer, I am told, they had copper kettles the same as ours.'

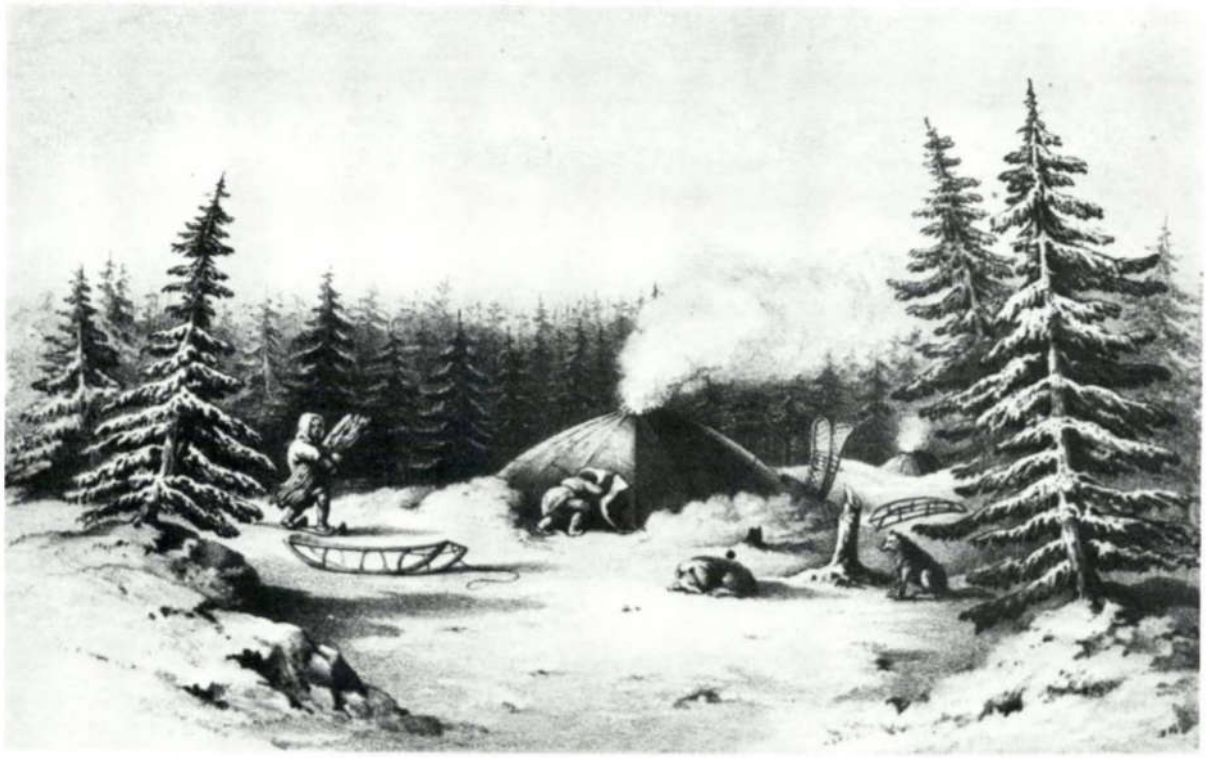
The Russians had borrowed a leaf from the book of Hudson's Bay Company practice before competition from the North West Company forced them to move inland. They set up their posts on the shores of Alaska and let the natives bring their furs down to the coast. The Kutchin were as fully astute as the Russians at barter. Reports of Russian methods soon passed from tribe to tribe, and the Kutchin were not slow to improve upon the instruction of the foreign traders, and soon could outcheat the Russians. A favourite artifice, reported by Thomas Simpson, was to stretch the tails of land otters into those of sea otters. When a skin was rejected as deficient in size and quality, it was enlarged, or coloured, and submitted again as a genuine article by a different trader.

The extent of the Russian traffic with North-west America may be judged from the figures of their trade published in H. H. Bancroft's *History of Alaska: 1730-1885*:

	1745-1803	1786-1797	1798-1822	1821-1842
Sea otter	96,047	15,647	—	25,000
Sea otter tails	58,618	13,941	71,130	23,506
Fur seal	417,758	139,266	1,767,340	458,000
Land otter	1,697	3,360	17,768	28,442
Black fox	10,421	4,625	15,112	160,000
Silver fox	15,147	5,222	24,535	—
Red fox	14,967	5,704	35,456	—
Ice fox	62,361	600	5,130	—
Grey ice fox	—	—	45,904	—
Whalebone	977	—	—	138,000
Walrus tusks	722	—	—	260,000
Beaver	—	426	56,001	162,000
Sable	—	200	17,921	15,666
Bear	—	—	2,650	5,355
Lynx	—	—	1,819	4,253
Wolverine	—	—	1,234	1,564
Mink	—	—	—	15,481
Muskrat	—	—	—	5,591
Wolf	—	—	—	201

After the coming of the Russians, beads superseded shells as the favoured article of trade. When the Hudson's Bay traders arrived in Kutchin territory, they found that the native standard of value was called a naki-eik. It consisted of long strings of beads joined together at the distance of a foot, in lines seven feet long. In the Hudson's Bay Company's standard of value, the whole naki-eik was equal to so many Made Beaver according to the value of the beads. 'No such near approach to money has been invented by any of the other tribes east of the Rocky Mountains' wrote Sir John Richardson.

In view of the ancient traffic between North-east Asia and North-west America, one may speculate upon the possibility that the form of the Kutchin naki-eik may have been inspired by Asiatic forms of currency. The Chinese 'cash' was a small, copper coin



Old Caroline Tsckyvuthen of Fort McPherson who lived in a winter lodge as the one above, drawn by Alexander Murray about the time of her birth. In this photograph taken in 1953, she is 100 years old.

Donald B. Marsh

about the size of the English halfpenny with a square hole in the middle for convenience in stringing. Ninety-six to ninety-eight coins on a string passed for one hundred, the missing coins being the cost of stringing them. Ten strings fastened together made one thousand. The cash could also be in strings of shells as with the earlier practice of the Kutchin. As late as 1800 A.D. cowrie shells were used in India as a medium of exchange. They were kept in strings, eighty cowries to a string. In *Sino-Jurchid Relations*, Henry Serruys tells of the Chinese giving presents to the Jurchen of the Amur that included 500 strings of glass beads. Chinese copper cash coins of the period of 1662-1722 have been found in Alaska and may be seen in the National Museum of Canada in Ottawa. It seems more than likely that the Kutchin through trade with North-east Asia may have copied some form of currency seen there, whether in strings of cash, shells, or beads.

According to William Lucas Hardisty, clerk in charge of Fort Yukon in 1854, the trading activities of the Kutchin sharpened their wits, and their superior intelligence was attributed to the active play of the intellectual faculties through intercourse with other tribes. They would harangue and protest for days against what they considered an inadequate payment for what they had to offer, and had recourse to every subterfuge and even intimidation to have the best of a bargain. They were keenly alive to the ridicule attached to the bad bargainers, did all in their power to fleece their opponents and boasted about it afterwards. William Hardisty obviously found the Kutchin more difficult to deal with than the southern tribes. They had been educated by tales of Russian practices, and this contact, indirect for many of the Kutchin tribes, stimulated them to efforts to get the long end of a trade deal.

Nevertheless, where the foreign traders dealt honourably with them, they reciprocated. The journals of Robert Campbell 1808-51 bear testimony to the natural honesty of the Kutchin:

> During last winter, a party of Indians came to Pelly Banks with furs for barter, but finding no one there with whom to trade, and seeing a few pieces of goods in the only house left standing by the fire, they opened up some of the goods themselves — powder, ball, shot, tobacco and other articles for trade, and took such of the things as they required or wanted, leaving in their place furs more than equivalent to pay for all. Their self-denial and integrity enabled them to resist the temptation to take all.

In 1826 Charles Dease, the trader in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company post at Fort Good Hope, retained two Kutchin who knew something of the Eskimo language and who had lived with an Eskimo tribe for a long time, to accompany Franklin down river. The latter soon discovered that their sole motive in consenting to accompany him was trade with the Eskimos, and they expected him to take their wives and families and all their baggage along. When he declined their services, they used angry and intemperate language. Franklin, fearing to hurt trade for the Company, spent several hours in debate with them, and at last realized that the whole scene had been staged for the purpose of obtaining more goods. His compliance with their wish left them quite contented.

The Kutchin jealously guarded their ancient trading rights. In 1826, a tribe, designated by the Eskimos the Mountain Indians, arrived at Herschel Island with Russian goods for trade, and seeing articles which the Franklin expedition had traded to the Eskimo, they feared that their trade would be ruined by the white men, and determined to destroy them. Hoping that Franklin would take them for the same tribe he had seen in the Mackenzie, they formed a plan of offering assistance, thus gaining an opportunity of staving in the white men's boats. The rest of the party would then rush up and kill all the white men. Being advised by the Eskimos, Franklin avoided these Indians by using a different channel on his return up river.

For as long as possible, the Kutchin of Peel River attempted to hold their position as middlemen between the Hudson's Bay traders at Fort McPherson and the Eskimos. It was thought by Sir John Richardson to be the main cause of various bloody encounters between the Kutchin and the Eskimos at the head of the Mackenzie River Delta for the first decade or so after the establishment of the fort on Peel River.

In 1872, Inspecting Chief Factor W. J. Christie reported that the Eskimos were visiting and trading at Peel River and that the Kutchin were more friendly towards them. Nevertheless, enmity flared up occasionally in murderous attacks upon each other until the end of the century.

The coming of the Hudson's Bay Company traders marked the end of the supremacy of Kutchin traders in their country west of Mackenzie River. It was not to be expected that the native traders, no matter how astute and with their deeply rooted habits of sharing, could withstand the organization, the wealth and the power of the Company, based as it was upon more than 200 years of successful trading experience with North American tribes.

The alternative to the Hudson's Bay Company was Russian occupation, which would have altered the whole history of the Canadian Northwest. Indeed, the Kutchin were fortunate in the extension of the Hudson's Bay Company's monopoly into their homeland. The relatively inaccessible nature of their territory combined with the Company monopoly of the fur trade protected them in their way of life from the exploitation that had accompanied unfettered competition in the south. Their isolation continued long after the official end of the monopoly by the sale of Rupert's Land to the Government of Canada, up until the accelerated development of air transport following World War II. ◆

'GIVE US GOOD MEASURE'

An Economic Analysis of Relations between the Indians and the Hudson's Bay Company before 1763

By Arthur J. Ray and Donald Freeman. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1978. 298 pp., illus. $17.50 cloth/ $4.95 paper.

Reviewed by Jennifer S. H. Brown

This book is a major scholarly contribution to Canadian fur-trade history. The authors, both affiliated with York University, bring strong credentials to their analysis: Ray is already well known in fur-trade circles as the author of *Indians in the Fur Trade* (Toronto 1974), and of numerous other writings in the field; and Freeman, an economic geographer associated with the York-Kenya project in Nairobi, contributes useful comparative perspectives.

The book is organized in four parts. Part one briefly provides background and context, both historical and theoretical, for the study. Its discussion of English-French-Indian interactions and rivalries is a useful synthesis. But the reader seeking to follow the argument of the book as a whole will also want to note that the authors here make clear their theoretical stance in the setting of a debate that has absorbed the attention of numerous anthropologists and other scholars for some decades. This debate, between two schools of thought recently known as the 'substantivist' and the 'formalist', centres on the nature and characteristics of economic activities, organization, and motivation in simple or 'primitive' societies as opposed to large, complex societies such as our own.

The substantivists, represented in fur-trade circles by E. E. Rich, Abraham Rotstein, and most recently, Calvin Martin (*Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade*, California, 1978), and in social science generally, by (most notably) Karl Polanyi, assume or argue that people in simpler societies typically do not act as 'economic men', absorbed in calculating about and maximizing returns or exploiting a market. Rather, economic relations and activities are subsumed in social and political ones. Trade is a vehicle for alliances, gift exchange, and ceremony, as well as meeting economic needs; it is not a specialized, profit-driven activity powered by the 'market mentality' attributed to industrial society.

The formalists, in contrast, argue that, with respect to economic motivations and organization, simple and complex societies differ in degree rather than kind; Indians too are economic men, interested in and able to manipulate, exploit, and maximize their trade opportunities. By extension, the formalists, among whom Ray and Freemen would rather pitch their tent, hold that standard tools of economic and statistical analysis may be applied to simpler as well as complex societies, and to their behaviour when interacting with one another. This debate is more than academic and esoteric; its contestants hold rather different views of the diversity or unity of human motivation and character.

The stage having thus been set, part two examines the geography, ecology, and institutional frameworks of the HBC fur trade. Of interest are the discussions of the roles of Indian middlemen in the trade, and of the constraints that climate imposed on all participants. The map (fig. 6) relating canoe travel distances from York Factory to the dates before which travellers would have to leave York in order to arrive home before freeze-up shows one constraint well. A description of the pretrade and trading ceremonies and procedures at the post itself is followed by a discussion of the nuances of the relationship between the post factor and the Indian trading captain as the principals in the trade process, and of the ties and obligations of both these parties to the agencies or support groups behind them.

Part three, a quantitative analysis of the economic structure of the HBC fur trade, is the core of the book. It begins with a detailed discussion of how the account books were organized, explaining the complexities and old-style conventions that modern researchers must grasp in order to use these records. There follows a valuable account of the system of overplus — the traders' means of modifying the trade standard laid down by London so that they could bargain and set prices for the widely varying sizes and qualities of pelts that the Indians brought them, as well as adjust, where necessary, to competitive conditions and improve their returns on goods traded. Among numerous other topics covered, we also gain a portrait of the Indians as traders and consumers — bringers of mixed furs that the factors were obliged to accept in order to perpetuate the trade relationship. Having a fixed transport capacity for both furs and trade goods and limited use for 'consumer durables', they often had excess purchasing power which they and the factors readily agreed to absorb in brandy more or less watered (a major HBC means of increasing trade overpluses). Bargainers themselves, and well aware of how to cultivate European trade rivalries to advantage, the Indians usually

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held the factors' overpluses to around or below the fifty per cent mark, satisfying their own needs and interests. And, to the frustration of some Europeans, these needs were limited. The Indians being ill-equipped to store, transport, or redistribute goods beyond a certain point, their demand levels were rigid and their price responsiveness limited — that is, if they were paid more for their furs, they brought fewer to trade, and usually declined the chance to build up purchasing power in excess of their practical or short-term wants. They were also discriminating buyers, seeking quality and expressing their views on the goods offered them by European competitors for their furs.

Part four places this study in the context of comparative economic and geographic theory, and explores its implications. The authors emphasize the utility of market concepts in studying the fur trade, and the extent to which economic considerations overshadowed political and social ones for both European and Indian, albeit noting the specific domains in which anthropological concepts of balanced and generalized reciprocity and gift exchange are relevant. They go on to examine the uses of locational geography, and particularly central-place theory, in studying spatial and diffusional patterns in the fur trade. Finally, they argue that it is important to work away from older and often ethnocentric dichotomies between simple and complex economies and trade systems, and useful to seek and refine basic concepts of broad general applicability in comparative economics and geography. This enterprise, besides facilitating cross-cultural analysis, would, they point out, assist understanding of many transitional, changing contact situations such as that of the fur trade. Ray and Freeman have themselves given this enterprise a major boost.

It is to be hoped that the plethora of charts and tables (83 of them) in this volume does not discourage the general reader, for the book has broad interest and importance, and offers refreshing insights into its topic. The prose is clear, although marred by some typographical errors (one might also query the use of the term 'Nor'Wester' to describe all Montreal traders from the 1760s on). The chapters are short, and their organization easy to follow. Specialists may learn from it all they might have wanted to know about eighteenth-century HBC bookkeeping, and trade fluctuations, overplus trade, and expense patterns at the different Bay posts; the details are here, in richness and complexity. But non-specialists tackling the book will find that it is indeed penetrable. Its novel approach to old sources neglected by most of us adds significantly to knowledge and challenges some pervasive older conceptions and assumptions, some explicit, some implicit, about the fur trade and trader-Indian relations.

Jennifer Brown was awarded her Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Chicago. Her thesis was 'Company Men and Native Families: Fur-trade Social and Domestic Relations in Canada's Old Northwest'.

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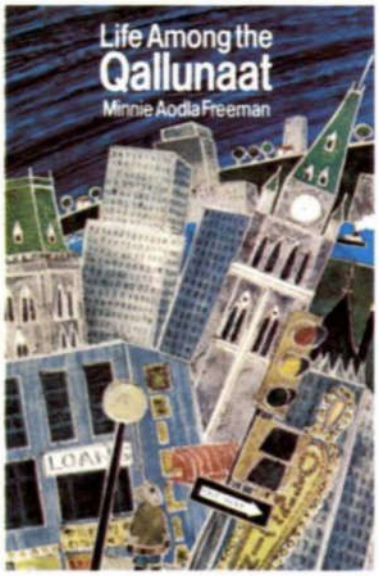


LIFE AMONG THE QALLUNAAT

By Minnie Aodla Freeman. Hurtig Publishers, Edmonton, 1978. 217 pp. $9.95.

Reviewed by Edith Iglauer

Traditionally, the Inuit adopt a polite facade with the Qallunaat — the white people — and this has been a barrier to open communication between them. In this fascinating book, *Life Among the Qallunaat*, Minnie Aodla Freeman, an Inuit, draws back the curtain on her feelings about events and experiences that occurred during the first twenty-odd years of her life. Now in her forties — she was born in 1937 — she recalls that early life, good and bad, that alternated for long periods of time between Inuit and white society. In her own words, she was 'caught between two worlds'.

Until she was seven, she lived among her own people exclusively. Home was a tent pitched at familiar locations around James Bay: at the place of her birth on the Cape Hope Islands; on Charlton Island; on the east coast of Arctic Quebec, in Old Factory and Fort George, where the Catholic mission school and hospital were; and at the south end of the Bay, at Moosonee, where there was a hospital, and Moose Factory, where the Anglican mission and another hospital were situated. In coastal settlements and at the mission schools she associated with Indian children, so very early in her life she learned not only English, but the Cree language. Eventually, her linguistic talent provided her with work in Ottawa, where this gifted woman became a translator for the Canadian government and began her creative writing career that has included poems, short stories, and now, this book.

The outstanding characteristic of this delightful account is its honesty. It describes Inuit life as it was in pre-settlement days, within a warm, loving family that moved seasonally from place to place along accustomed routes; it discusses with engaging frankness family relationships, the training and discipline of children always with future responsibilities in mind, the small events of busy, everyday existence.

Minnie's maternal grandfather was Weetaltuk, leader of the Cape Hope Islands Inuit until his death in 1959 at the age of ninety-eight. He chose where the seasons were spent and most important, when the ice was strong enough to carry men

and dog teams to the Hudson's Bay outpost at Old Factory. His granddaughter wrote:

'This ritual has always been memorable to me. I can still see him walking out of his door, all dressed in a new outfit and harpoon in hand, to test the safety of the ice. Feeling with the harpoon, stepping where he poked, he walked slowly and did not look back. Finally he would stride boldly, without making himself lighter like one trying not to wake a baby. Then everyone could see he was now walking with his normal walk, slowly becoming smaller and smaller until he had no shape, but looked like a moving dot. Then he became bigger and bigger and more recognizable, until he again entered his house. In no time the news would be out that the ice was *sikuttuk*, solid ice. There would be no doubt that the traders for the community would leave the next day. This was one night of the year that the whole community would go to bed early.'

There are sad events, cruel ones. Minnie's mother died at the age of twenty-one, when her daughter was only four. She and her brother were brought up by her paternal grandparents. Her father, unlike most Inuit widowers with young children, did not marry again, at least during the time covered by this book. He is portrayed as a deeply concerned single parent whom she loves, but her childhood was dominated by her strict, wise grandmother and her grandfather, Symma, the head of their immediate household until his death when Minnie was sixteen.

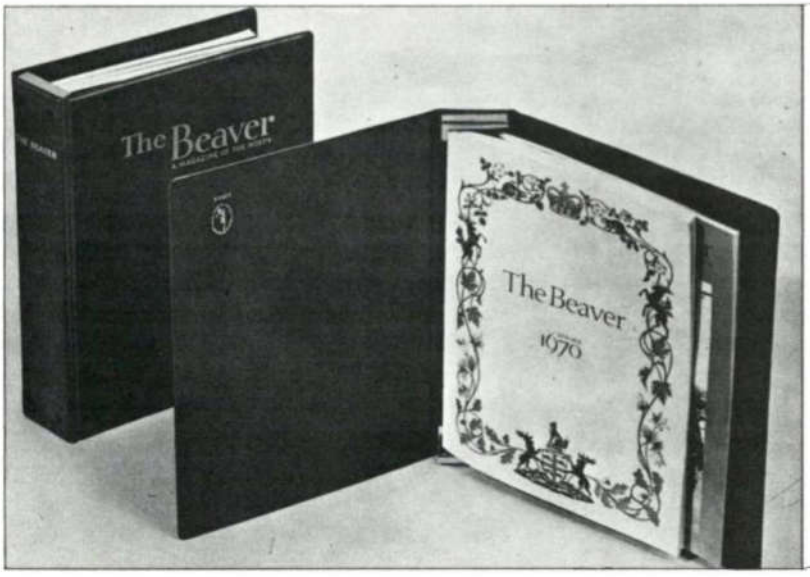
The book is divided into three parts. It opens with Minnie's reactions to her early experiences in Ottawa, where she arrived at twenty to work for the government. Stepping from a train in the big city for the first time, she saw train tracks. 'Am I supposed to walk on them or shall I walk on the cement?' she asked herself. Her first ride in an automobile astonished her. 'How does the man who is driving know when to stop and when to go? Does he count to a certain number? Or does the other car let him know?' she wondered. 'The blinking red light on the car ahead meant nothing to me.'

When Minnie unpacked her clothes in the room she shared with a white girl in the women's residence where she was to live, the white girls all stood around and stared as no Eskimo garments emerged, until one of them asked, 'Where are your, you know, clothes where you come from? Skins.' Minnie wrote, 'She practically spat out the word and her face had an ugly look. It was too much for me.'

When Minnie crossed streets against the light, which she did for a long time, she wondered why no one followed her and why all the cars honked. She almost lost her arm in a revolving door at a post office where she had gone to buy 'little stickers' to send on letters home. She was so overwhelmed by her first trip on 'a crawling thing with a sign above it, ESCALATOR, that she asked herself 'Qanuk taima?' — 'What now?' and went straight home 'to think about my adventure' instead of buying the sweater she had intended to purchase in the store.

The second part of the book deals with the story of her very early life spent with her grandparents, and the third section, half the book, describes what happened to her from the time she was left at the Anglican mission school at seven — 'I was Dumped' is the subject heading with which it begins — until she arrived in Ottawa. There were intermittent trips home that sometimes extended to a year or two, during one of which she began to menstruate, an event for which she had been totally unprepared by her old-fashioned grandmother. She describes the behaviour of her family towards her and her own startled reactions with touching sincerity, and a delicate humour.

'We Were Shipped Like Cargo' is the topical heading for her experience as a patient in the southern hospital, at Hamilton, Ontario, where she subsequently started but never completed nursing training; and 'Housework is a Lonely Affair' tells about her miserable experience working for an ignorant and unstable white woman, at Moose Factory. There were wonderful times when her father came to visit and terrible times, when she suffered as only a lonely child can, from the cruel treatment she received from an



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unstable Inuit cousin attending the same mission school.

Eventually, she made her choice to live primarily in the world of the Qallunaat, 'The People Who Pamper Their Eyebrows', which she further translates as 'humans who pamper or fuss with nature; of materialistic habit.' But the long visits home have left their mark. The book ends on a nostalgic note:

'I have learned that I am not dependent on the weather, like I used to be when I was a nomad. I don't have to take my furnishings along every time I travel . . . I have decided, though, that there is no spring in the South. Spring, to me, is when the snow begins to melt slowly, when I can see and hear streams running into one another, when the mass of ice begins to show huge cracks, when I hear geese flying over my head, when I begin to run outside without a heavy parka, when I see hunters dressed in white stalking basking seals in the sun, when I see wild, tiny flowers blooming . . . and I miss my dear people who are becoming stranger, even to me, covering their familiar ways with another culture.'

The question we would like Minnie Aodla Freeman to answer, now that we have had the pleasure of hearing about her first twenty years or so is: What happened then? I hope she will tell us.

Edith Iglauer of 'The New Yorker' is author of 'Denison's Ice Road' and 'Inuit Journey', a recently published paperback of her book 'The New People', a story of arctic co-operatives brought up to date with a new introduction and epilogue.

THE INUIT WORLD:
An Annotated Block Print illustrating Wildlife, Weapons, Tools, and Objects of Everyday Life, with names in English and Inuktitut Languages.

Kingait Press: Cape Dorset, Baffin Island, 1977. 26 pp. Bound in paper covers, linocut enclosed in separate envelope, housed together in a hinged box. Available through Kingait Press. $75.00.

Reviewed by Myron Turner

The Inuit World is the first printed book to be produced in an Eskimo community. In 1972, the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative decided to establish a typographical print shop to complement their already existing artists' printmaking facility. Through Alan Fleming, a leading Canadian typographer, the co-operative learned of Wil Hudson, a Vancouver printer with a long commitment to the art of fine printing. He was a founding member of — and printer for — the Alcuin Society, whose membership consists of the proprietors of private presses; and he had set up a complete nineteenth-century print shop for the Library School of The University of British Columbia, for which he rebuilt an old iron handpress. In the summer of 1974, the type and equipment from Hudson's Vancouver print shop were shipped to Baffin Island together with a small machine shop which enables Hudson to make parts when needed and affords the Kingait Press a necessary measure of self-sufficiency. In 1976, the federal government contributed funds to the project through its local employment assistance program; that aid made possible the purchase of type and materials for *Inuit World*.

The text of *Inuit World* was typeset entirely by hand and consists of a commentary on a finely rendered linocut by the artist Kanangia. The artist's image is a montage of natural and man-made objects from the daily life — past and present — of the Inuit. According to Hudson's account, the text developed simultaneously with the type-setting, as the compositors — Pia Pootoogook and Udjualuk Etidoole — went about translating copious notes supplied by the artist in syllabics and consulting their own memories and the memories of some of the older men of the community. Thus, the text moves by the logic of memory and association, revealing the process of its composition. It holds before the reader the present consciousness of the Cape Dorset Eskimo as he surveys a world of human and natural objects which carries with it the reverberations of a past which was ahistorical, in that sense timeless, and a present which has given that very same world to history. 'In traditional times' the commentary observes, 'the Inuit did not keep a tally of the years.'

The Fourth North American Fur Trade Conference

A four-day conference on the North American fur trade will be held on October 1-4, 1981, at Grand Portage, Minnesota, and at Old Fort William, Thunder Bay, Ontario. The United States-Canadian event will coincide with the 250th anniversary of the landing of French explorer and fur trader Varennes de la Vérendrye at Grand Portage in August, 1731 and his subsequent wintering at Kaministiquia. It follows a highly successful precedent established 50 years ago when, on 22 August 1931, Americans and Canadians gathered at Grand Portage to commemorate the 200th anniversary. The location of the conference at two interpretive facilities closely linked with the North West Company, and the presentation of papers by authorities on the North American fur trade promise to attract scholars, historians, and fur-trade buffs alike. Conference themes will be wide ranging.

A primary purpose of this announcement is to alert scholars who are currently engaged in or are contemplating projects dealing with relevant aspects of the fur trade and who may wish to present papers to the 1981 Conference.

Selected papers will be published.

If you are interested in giving a paper, or wish to be placed on the conference mailing list, please write to:

1981 FUR TRADE CONFERENCE,
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690 Cedar Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

The Inuit World: the print by Kanangia and right, the title page from the book that was typeset by hand at Cape Dorset, NWT.

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VII.

The guiding purpose of *The Inuit World* is to make permanent the memory of how the Inuit made nature serve them in traditional times. We learn that the 'feathered skin' of a goose 'made hand and face towels, with the wings being used for brooms', that a seal skin could be inflated and used as a buoy or a raft if several were fastened together. The commentary also recalls the hardships of nature, however. 'Getting enough to eat has always been a matter of concern in this land, and up until recent times actual starvation was not unknown to us. Fortunately, such severe conditions no longer prevail, and the Inuit are now free to pursue broader interests.' But this freedom is burdened with ambivalence: 'even though most agree that many changes are for the better, we often regret the passing of old customs, and it is disturbing to note the disappearance of traditional women's skills, once indispensable to the survival of our people.' This ambivalence is reflected in the feeling that the white man brought mixed blessings: 'When [power] boats first appeared, and the sea animals had not yet learned to fear them, hunting was greatly facilitated. In later years, when the animals had come to fear them, hunting once more became as difficult as ever it had been. Indeed, the migratory habits of animals have in general rendered them less accessible to the hunter as the practice of motorized pursuit has increased.'

A recurring motif of the commentary is the precious character of wood, traditionally available to the Inuit only in the form of driftwood. Hence the Inuit protected their valuable wooden paddles from damage by fitting the tips 'with ivory inserts'. 'Wood as a building material' write the commentators, 'was unknown to our people until the arrival of wooden ships in the late nineteenth century. It was the wrecks of whalers that first provided timber of sufficient size to be worked into wooden houses.' With the emergence from the sea of an unheard-of abundance of wood, the Inuit were brought into history. *The Inuit World* represents the consciousness of this paradox.

The typography of *The Inuit World* is clean and uncluttered. It has an architectural simplicity and weight which is reflected in the design of the title page. The press-work is excellent, especially given the fact that it is printed on a 50 per cent rag content paper known for the production problems it presents to printers. The book was bound by hand in paper covers and the linocut, which is signed, comes in a separate blue envelope. Both are housed in a hinged blue box. The edition is limited to 1,000 copies. The quality of *Inuit World* as a printed object, makes it a fitting complement to the printmaking arts at Cape Dorset, and one looks forward to future productions of the Kingait Press under the direction of Wil Hudson. The next title, according to Hudson, will be an unpublished diary kept by an early twentieth-century missionary to Baffin Island.

Myron Turner is professor of English at the University of Manitoba, and co-proprietor with his wife Susan, of Four Humours Press, Winnipeg.

The INDEX to Outfit 309, Summer 1978 to Spring 1979 is now available from THE BEAVER Office at Hudson's Bay House, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 2R1

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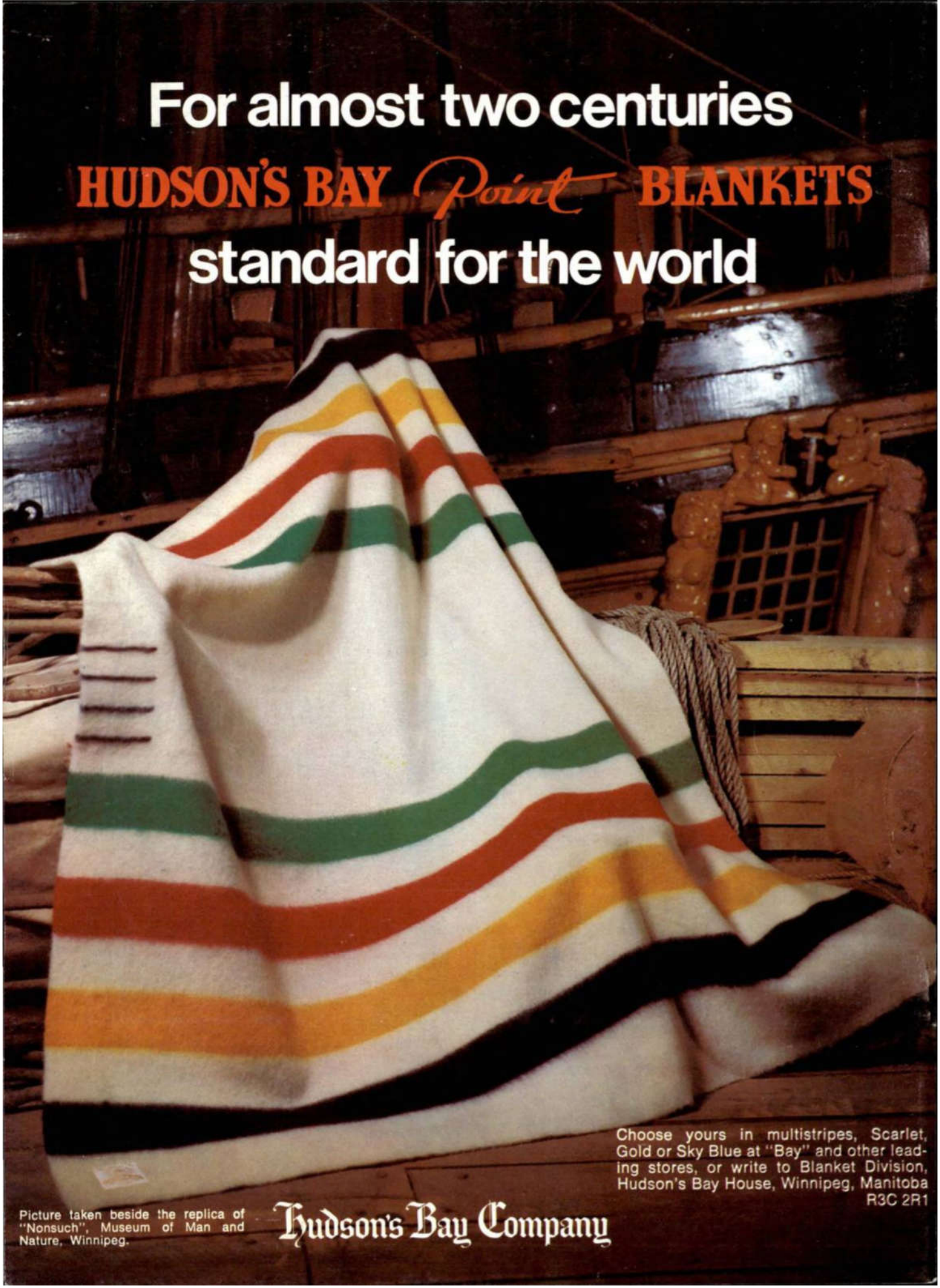
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